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## LECTURES ON CLASSICAL SUBJECTS



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LECTURES  
ON  
CLASSICAL SUBJECTS

BY  
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## PREFACE.

I HAVE called this book 'Lectures,' partly because a simple title of this kind would have been natural to the Greeks and Romans, partly because I could not devise one which would describe it more exactly. An old Oxford rhyme has been in my mind :

' Do not to many lectures go,  
For whether you do so or no,  
You'll find the substance of his notes  
Much better in the books he quotes'—

' much better,' no doubt, intrinsically, but often scattered, and not very accessible, and sometimes too controversial and complicated to be of use to the student. The Professional Scholar will not find much, if anything, that is new to him in this volume. It is not to him that it is addressed :

' *Pérsium non cúro legere, Laélium Decumúm volo.*'

This D. Laelius, Cicero says, was 'vir bonus et non inlitteratus, sed nihil ad Persium.'

The first five lectures are concerned with the spirit and ideas of the classical poets: the next two with the form of their poetry: the remaining three are added in the hope that they may be useful or suggestive to students as an introduction to the large subjects of which they treat, and of which they do not for a moment profess to give a complete account.

The lecture on 'Literary Criticism at Rome' was composed before Prof. Saintsbury published the first volume of his *History of Criticism*: I have included it here, because it is so different in scale, so much slighter and shorter, that it hardly comes into competition with his treatment of the subject. In the lecture on Romance I find that I have unknowingly touched upon a subject dealt with by Prof. Butcher. I knew his 'Aspects of the Greek Genius' in its first edition, and I think I had assumed—it was long before there was any question of becoming his colleague—that the second edition did not differ from it in contents. My lecture was one of a group, and resembled the others in subject and treatment: so I have refrained, though with some reluctance, from excising it.

What I have written about Horace's metres

was finally printed before I had seen Prof. Sonnenschein's interesting exposition of the accentual theory of the Latin Sapphic (*Class. Rev.*, June, 1903). I should have liked to discuss that view, though I do not agree with it. I do not say that accent had nothing to do with the matter at all: some Roman innovations in metre seem to me to be due to the fact that the stronger Latin accent, if it coincided with *ictus*, made the metrical structure too obvious (p. 240). But is it likely that an Augustan poet, and Horace in particular, would, in one of his metres and not in others, deliberately aim at an accentual structure? Nothing can be inferred from the regular incidence of accent in his Sapphics: given a 'caesura' where he usually put it (p. 253), and given the principles of Latin accentuation, that regularity was inevitable. Eickhoff, I think, mistook an effect for a cause.

On many points I am indebted to discussions with pupils or friends, but it would have been cumbrous and difficult to trace such obligations in detail. In most cases I have tried to indicate in a footnote some of the books where a fuller treatment of the subject may be found. But I should be sorry to be



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understood as recommending the perusal of modern works about the classics in preference to a study of the ancient writers themselves. No doubt I am adding one to the number of such modern dissertations: but that misdeed may be in part atoned for, if some of these lectures be thought to set a useful example of a simple and unambitious line of inquiry, which consists rather in collecting and arranging what the ancients have to say on some important topic than in theorising about it or criticising the theories of other people.

W. R. HARDIE.

*July, 1903.*



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I.

THE FEELING FOR NATURE IN THE  
GREEK AND ROMAN POETS.

οὐχ ἅμῃν τὰ καλὰ πρῶτοις καλὰ φαίνεται εἶμεν,  
οἱ θνητοὶ πελόμεσθα τὸ δ' αἰῶνον οὐκ ἐσορῶμεν.

*Theocritus.*

ONE of the minor poets of the eighteenth century discusses in an ode called 'The Enthusiast' the question whether man can find real happiness in communing with Nature. It is not possible, is his answer.

'Art thou not man, and dar'st thou find  
A bliss that leans not to mankind?  
Presumptuous thought and vain!'

This poem of Whitehead's belongs to the middle of the century, and its view of Nature may be taken as representative of the age. But a change was at hand: a new movement was beginning both in this country and on the continent of

Europe. Thomson's *Seasons* had already been written, and by 1750 it had been translated into German. The classicism or pseudo-classicism of the first half of the century was to be dethroned. A revolt was declared against the artificial and conventional: there was to be 'a return to Nature.' The writings of Rousseau were one of the strongest forces on the side of change, affecting political and social matters as well as poetry and speculative thought. The movement was a complex one: it meant different things for different people, and sometimes it resulted only in a new kind of artificiality. But at all events it had distinct and recognisable results in literature. It brought with it an enthusiasm for primitive and simple poetry, or what was supposed to be such, for Homer, Macpherson's *Ossian*, the *Niebelungenlied*. And within a century from the date of 'The Enthusiast' several notable changes had taken place in the attitude of poetry to Nature. Sir Walter Scott had lent a new charm to natural scenery by linking it with heroic story and romantic adventure. Poetic appreciation of Nature became wider in its range: it began to include her wilder and sterner aspects as



well as her more peaceful ones. Lucretius thinks of mountains as waste ground—as encroaching upon, and rendering useless for man, a large portion of the earth's surface.<sup>1</sup> But to Byron mountains and torrents and stormy seas are no longer merely repellent, comfortless or terrible: they begin to have a beauty and a fascination of their own. The 'magic' or 'mystery' of Nature was probably, as Mr. Matthew Arnold contends, an element of Celtic origin in modern literature: certainly the Ossianic heroes are more at home amid thunder and storm-clouds than a Greek would have been, and they remind one of a curious remark made by Aristotle in the *Ethics*, that 'the Celts have no fear of waves or earthquakes.'<sup>2</sup> In Wordsworth, again, there appeared conspicuously the idea of a kind of companionship with Nature, the belief that Nature can do much for man: solace and strength may be derived from associating with her, the mind is tranquilised and refined in her presence. Nature has

<sup>1</sup> 'Inde avidi partem montes silvaeque ferarum possedere.'—LUCR. v. 201.

<sup>2</sup> Contrast with this the horror felt by Achilles at the thought of perishing in a river 'like a swineherd boy who is swept away when he crosses a ford in winter.'—//. xxi. 281.

4 *LECTURES ON CLASSICAL SUBJECTS*

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become a moral and educative power; she is endowed with a voice, and she promises that the human nursling entrusted to her care shall be guided aright,

‘ In rock and plain,  
In earth and heaven, and glade and bower,  
Shall feel an overseeing power  
To kindle or restrain.’<sup>1</sup>

All this is very far removed from the attitude of Whitehead.

These are very familiar facts or tendencies, but it is well to recall them now. If we are setting out to look for appreciation of Nature in ancient poets, we must realise first what it is we are looking for. There are clearly several quite distinct aspects of the modern feeling for Nature, aspects which our slight historical sketch has not exhausted or analysed. There is, to begin with, the interest in exact and vivid description of Nature, an interest which, perhaps, belongs rather to the painter than to the poet, but one which only a very narrow conception of poetry could exclude—the poet, in fact, sometimes has an advantage over the painter, as

<sup>1</sup> The poem beginning, ‘Three years she grew in sun and shower.’

when he puts in a few words the effect of waves breaking on a moonlit beach :

‘Like fire in snow the moonlight blazed  
Amid the champing foam.’

Secondly, there is the romantic and emotional appeal to Nature for sympathy, coupled with the belief or imagination that Nature responds and changes with the changing moods of man, her sunshine accompanying his happiness, while her gloom and storm echo his misery and despair. This also might be illustrated from the ballad which I have just quoted, by the boding storm which hangs over the coast of Fife on the fatal night when King James rode to Perth.<sup>1</sup> And thirdly, there is the Wordsworthian view, the more comprehensive view of Nature as a whole, which belongs to thought and reflection rather than to feeling and passion, an idea which we must look for, if at all, in the philosophers rather than in the poets of the ancient world. The second of these tendencies is what Ruskin has called the ‘Pathetic Fallacy,’ and it may be useful to recall a triple

<sup>1</sup> A good example is to be found in a short poem of Tennyson’s, ‘The Letters,’ where storm and starlight answer to the quarrel and reconciliation of the lovers.

distinction which he draws in the chapter of *Modern Painters* where the subject is discussed. We are looking, it is to be remembered, for definite ideas or tests which can be applied to ancient poetry: we wish to ask 'Where does this occur?' 'Where that?' Ruskin distinguishes three kinds of vision, or three ways of looking at things. There is the vision of the plain or common man, who sees clearly because he neither feels acutely nor thinks deeply, for whom a primrose is a yellow primrose and nothing more. Then there is the vision of the romantic or sentimental poet, who feels strongly and allows his feeling to colour the prospect for him, and does not see things simply as they are: 'Frown upon me, and the landscape grows wintry; smile, and spring is aflower again.'<sup>1</sup> And lastly, we have the vision of the strongest and greatest poets, who feel acutely and think deeply, but still see clearly, who are not blinded or led astray by their emotion. This type of vision is conspicuous in Homer, and an illustration is found in the passage where Helen looks in vain for her brothers Castor and Pollux:

<sup>1</sup> ἦν μοι συννεφεὶς ὄμμα βάλης ποτέ, χεῖμα δέδορκα,  
ἦν δ' ἱλαρὸν βλέψης, ἡδὺ τέθηλεν ἔαρ.—MELEAGER.

'the nurturing earth covered them, at home in Lacedaemon'—*φυσίζοος αἰα*, the earth is still the mother of all, though Castor and Pollux be dead. Sometimes the poet's feeling takes the form of a protest against the immutability of Nature; of this there is a simple and familiar example in the lines:

'Ye banks and braes o' bonny Doon,  
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair?'

The expectation of a response is, indeed, illusory, as Ruskin's name for it implies; and even the idea that prolonged communing with Nature can tranquillise or satisfy the human spirit is true only with limitations, and is by no means the general creed of modern poets. The moral of Shelley's *Alastor*, for instance, is that Nature does *not* suffice alone: severance of all human ties ends in ruin and despair: the poet finds himself

'Wasting these surpassing powers  
In the deaf air, to the blind earth and heaven,  
That echoes not my thoughts—'

to the winds, as an ancient poet puts it,

'quae nullis sensibus auctae  
nec missas audire queunt nec reddere voces.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Catullus, lxiv. 165.

To what extent do the modern feelings and fancies about Nature appear in ancient poets? Are they at all fully anticipated? The usual, and substantially true, answer is that they appear to a very slight extent. Like Whitehead, the Greek is slow to recognise 'a bliss that leans not to mankind.' 'Presumptuous' is exactly what he would call it, for he did think of Nature, or of parts of Nature, as higher than man: the stars, for instance, are of finer and more subtle substance, and it belongs to the god Posidon, not to man, to be on familiar terms with the sea. In a moment of oppression or despair the Greek might appeal to Earth and Sun as visible and present divine powers, but he did not readily turn his thoughts to Nature, or deliberately seek to know her in her solitude.

'To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and fell,  
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,  
Where things that own not man's dominion dwell,  
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been'—

this was a thing which he did not spontaneously do, and which in his ordinary moods had little attraction for him. The interests of human society, the active life of a civic community,

claimed all his attention. In the *Phaedrus*, though the beauty of the country near Athens, by the banks of the Ilissus, is very vividly described, Socrates is represented as disclaiming any interest in it. 'Trees and country places have nothing to tell me,' οὐδέν με ἐθέλει διδάσκειν, 'men in the city have.' Imbued with this spirit, the Greek did not demand from Art any very careful delineation of inanimate Nature. Landscape-painting was practised in Græco-Roman times, but for the earlier period the principle seems to have been that which Plato lays down in the *Critias*—that a slight sketch (σκιαγραφία ἀσαφής, a mere adumbration) would suffice for the background, while the human figures must be delineated with accuracy and care—everybody is an acute critic in regard to *them*. Sculpture was the characteristic art of the older period, and in a relief the background is, as a rule, only faintly indicated.

Before we apply our tests in detail and inquire where this or that vein of feeling can be traced, it may be well to ask, what exactly do we find in Homer?—for the Homeric poems stand at the portal of classical poetry, and all later poets owe much to them. Ruskin cites

from Homer an example of his third type of vision. Is he reading into the words *φυσίζοος αἶα* a deeper meaning than they had for the poet himself? Would it be true to say that the *first* type of vision, that of the plain man who sees a primrose as it is, is the prevailing one in the Homeric poems? Or if we said so, should we be going equally far astray in the opposite direction? Certainly there is little or no reflection and sentiment in Homer; the poet does not analyse his own feelings or pause to muse over them. But consider the pictures of Nature which he has given us, their range and vividness and beauty! Hardly any important aspect of Nature, animate or inanimate, is unrepresented in the similes of Homer. Thunder and breaking waves, a snowstorm, a cloud approaching over the sea, the roar of distant torrents on the mountains—the wilder scenes of Nature are depicted with the same exactness and clearness of vision as the more peaceful ones. The poet is clearly an observer whose senses are sound and unsophisticated, who has no fancies or prejudices to impede his view. It would be extremely rash to say that a poet who can describe Nature so

effectively has no feeling for the beauty of Nature; it is indeed incredible, and in some indirect ways it can be disproved. Homer does apply the adjective 'beautiful' to natural objects, and when he has described the cave of Calypso, he adds, 'even a god who came there might well gaze with delight upon the place.'<sup>1</sup> What Homer lacks—and he is better without it—is the sentimentalism which dwells upon its own feelings and congratulates itself upon their subtlety, a state of mind which belongs to a much later age, and which sometimes results in unreality of feeling: the poet is like the Duke in Browning's poem who affected the ways of the past:

'All that the old Dukes had been without knowing it,  
This Duke would fain know that he was without being it.'

He wishes rather to know that he is an admirer of nature than to be one.

There are two characteristics of the Homeric view of Nature which we may note before leaving it. One is that it 'leans to mankind'; natural objects are seen as they affect man and his wants. Thus the earth is *ζείδωρος*,

<sup>1</sup> καὶ ἀθάνατός περ ἐπελθὼν

θηήσαιο ἰδὼν καὶ τερφθεῖη φρεσὶν ἦσιν.—*Od.* v. 73.

the giver of corn; the sun, *φαεσίμβροτος*, a source of light for men. Secondly, both in his similes and in his narrative, the poet gives us rather the broad and permanent features of natural objects than their transitory appearances: he does not aim at minute and momentary effects. At times there even arises some incongruity in this way, as Alexandrian commentators pointed out. The stars shine 'conspicuous' (*ἀριπρεπέα*) about the bright moon; but it is in moonlight that the stars have least apparent brightness. More minute observation seems to be attempted in a later time by the lyric poets, as when Sappho speaks of the stars as hiding their brightness around the moon. But there is a great deal of minute observation in Homer too. The Homeric poet, it may be noted, rarely attributes any kind of feeling to inanimate Nature; one feels it to be very exceptional when the sea is spoken of as 'foreboding' or feeling the approach of stormy winds.<sup>1</sup>

Let us now ask some of the questions which our preliminary survey suggested. Where is Nature thought of as sympathising

<sup>1</sup> ὁσσόμενον λιγέων ἀνέμων λαιψηρὰ κέλευθα.—*Il.* xiv. 17.

with man? Under what circumstances does man appeal to Nature for sympathy? What scenes in Nature have the greatest charm for the ancient poet? Is there anything analogous to Wordsworth's view of Nature?

Some of the most remarkable passages in which Nature is endowed with feeling have to be set aside if we define our inquiry very strictly. Nature is not sympathising with *man*, but with some god or half-divine being. The sea lashes the shore of the Troad, where the Greeks are encamped, at a crisis in the battle; it is when Posidon, the lord of the waters, takes the field. The earth puts forth fresh flowers for lovers; it is the wedlock of Zeus and Hera. So, in a later poet, Theognis, it is said that 'the primeval earth smiled and the deep waters of the sea grew glad.'<sup>1</sup> It is at the moment when the god Apollo is born in Delos. A little later still we have in the Prometheus of Aeschylus both an appeal to Nature and a response: the appeal near the beginning of the play, where Prometheus calls upon the sky and swift-winged winds to witness

<sup>1</sup> ἐγέλασσε δὲ γαῖα πελώρη  
γῆθησεν δὲ βαθὺς πόντος ἄλός πολιῆς.—*Theog.* 9-10.

his sufferings,<sup>1</sup> upon the 'myriad laughter of the ocean waves,' the springs and the all-seeing sun: the response described in a choric passage further on, where it is said that the wave of the sea pities him as it falls and the depths make lament.<sup>2</sup> Here again we must remember, what a modern reader very readily forgets, that Prometheus is a god, a Titan and an elemental power of Nature himself. Is the search then to be fruitless? Not altogether: there *are* stories in the Greek poets in which Nature is affected by the fortunes of men. Notably, there is the tale of Atreus and Thyestes, where the sun alters his course to avoid the spectacle of human suffering, *δυστυχία βροτείω*, moved by the calamities of men.<sup>3</sup> But it must be admitted that such incidents or ideas are rare in the poetry of the Athenian age. They are more easily discovered in the poetry of Alexandria and

<sup>1</sup> ὦ δῖος αἰθῆρ, κ.τ.λ.—*Prom.* 88 f.

<sup>2</sup> βοᾷ δὲ πόντιος κλύδων  
συμπίπνων, στένει βυθός.—*Prom.* 447.

<sup>3</sup> This phrase is used by Euripides in a lyric passage, where (of all places!) he takes occasion to express a sceptical doubt about the story:

λέγεται, τὰν δὲ πῶστιν  
σμηκρὰν παρ' ἑμοῦγ' ἔχει.—*Electra*, 737.

Rome. Here we have the graceful or venturesome fancy of learned poets, rather than serious feeling or belief. Nature bewails Daphnis, in Theocritus; the jackals and wolves, and the lion in his thicket. So, too, in Virgil the sufferings of Gallus call forth pity from laurels and tamarisks, from the pine-clad heights of Maenalus and the cliffs of icy Lycaeus:

‘Illum etiam lauri, etiam flevire myricae,  
pinifer illum etiam sola sub rupe iacentem  
Maenalus et gelidi flevērunt saxa Lycaeī.’

Daphnis, we may again be reminded, was a divine being and not a man: the original, popular idea was *not* that of sympathy with human distress. But in the *Eclogues* of Virgil the idea of a sympathising Nature is really frequent and not to be explained away. In Virgil we can find a precedent even for some of the most subtle and romantic forms which the idea has assumed in modern poets; for instance, for the feelings attributed to flowers in Tennyson’s *Maud*: ‘Phyllidis adventu nostrae nemus omne virebit.’

Where, and under what conditions, is an appeal addressed to Nature for sympathy? This was our second question. Generally, the

answer will be, when no other resource is left, when human help and companionship are beyond the reach of the sufferer. Thus Philoctetes, betrayed and abandoned by his fellow-men, recounts his woes to the havens and capes, the wild beasts and the beetling cliffs of Lemnos: 'for I know no other to whom I can tell them.'<sup>1</sup> And similarly Ajax, in his moral isolation and despair, entreats the Sun to carry tidings of his death to Salamis, and bids farewell to the streams and plains of Troy. Antigone appeals to the springs of Dirce and the holy soil of Thebes. Electra, isolated under the hostile roof of her mother and Aegisthus, addresses her complaints to the Light and the Air of Heaven. It is in circumstances like these that Natural Powers are appealed to, in the older poetry of Greece. In the more artificial and sentimental poetry of Graeco-Roman times, the personification of natural objects is more facile and frequent.

What, we next proposed to ask, are the scenes in Nature which had the greatest attraction for the ancients? The landscape which a Greek would choose for his environ-

<sup>1</sup> οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἶδ' ὅτι λέγω.—*Philoct.* 938.

ment was a tranquil one, a cultivated spot or a spot capable of cultivation, a quiet combination of meadow, wood, and stream, of pleasing features limited and definitely grouped: not vast solitudes or rugged heights. For rivers, as irrigating and fertilising powers, there is a friendly feeling in ancient poetry. No doubt they are also thought of as turbulent and destructive: Homeric similes include the ravages of a swollen river, and the common representation of a river as 'tauriformis'<sup>1</sup> seems to imply the same idea of anger and strength. But it is noticeable that rivers alone, among objects of Nature, receive frequently the epithets 'beautiful' or 'lovely,' καλὰ ῥέεθρα, ἐρατεινὰ ῥέεθρα.<sup>2</sup> Such adjectives may be applied to a grove or a meadow or a cave (ἄντρον ἐπήρατον): they are also applied not unfrequently to the work of men's hands, to a harbour or a town. But they are very rarely bestowed upon mountains. Only one passage is known to me, in Greek Literature,

<sup>1</sup> ὁ μὲν ἦν ποταμοῦ σθένος ὑψικέρω τετραδρου  
φάσμα ταύρου—(Achelous).—SOPH. *Trach.* 508.

<sup>2</sup> Compare the description of the waters of Cephissus in Sophocles' Ode upon Colonus, where there is a touch of personification in ἀνπνοι κρήραι.

where mountains are explicitly thought of as capable of possessing beauty. It is in the *Critias* of Plato, where it is said that the mountains encircling Atlantis surpassed in number and size and beauty all those that now exist.<sup>1</sup> Archilochus, the early 'iambic' poet, describing the rugged and forest-clad island of Thasos, denies that it is beautiful: 'it stands in the sea like an ass's back, crowned with savage wood! it is no beautiful or lovely place such as the land about the streams of Siris.' We may observe that, while denying its beauty, the poet describes the island in vivid and forcible terms, ὄλης ἀγρίας ἐπιστεφής; and, generally, that the epithets applied to mountains by Greek poets would show, if they were collected, a wonderful appreciation of the various features of mountain scenery. 'Many-fountained Ida' 'clad in waving woods' (εἰνοσίφυλλον), 'full of wooded glens' (πολυπτύχου ὑληέσσης), 'snow-clad,' 'touched by the sun's first ray' (πρωτόβολον ἀλίφ). These epithets and others, along with many descriptive passages in Homer, Aeschylus, and Pindar, and with a remarkable passage

<sup>1</sup> *Critias*, 118, B.

in Aristophanes, where the movement of the advancing 'Clouds' is described, serve to show that what the Greeks lacked was not sensibility for the beautiful aspects of mountains, but merely the abstract thought or reflection that mountains are beautiful. It remains true, however, that mountains had less attraction for them than other scenes of Nature had, and less than they have for the modern mind.

There were two ways in which mountains did exercise a spell over the Greek. One of these was patriotism. The mountains of his home were always welcome to his eyes. Thus the wily Odysseus, disguised as a Cretan, lends plausibility to his narrative by speaking in an affectionate tone of 'the snowy mountains of Crete': so again, on the journey to Brundisium, the mountains of his native Apulia catch the eye of Horace:

'Incipit ex illo montes Apulia notos  
ostentare mihi';

and the Italian provincial gladly returns

'Ad patrios montes et ad incunabula nostra.'

The second occasion on which mountains had a fascination for the Greek was in the ecstatic

worship of Dionysus, a kind of revolt or reaction against the order and regularity of civilised city-life: the *πέρας* is forgotten, and the *ἄπειρον* has its revenge: the Bacchants are swept away by the vast forces of Nature, they are identified with her, endowed with more than human powers; the snows of Cithaeron or Rhodope are powerless to harm them, and they can rend lions limb from limb. The wildest fastnesses of the hills are the appropriate scene for their revels: 'a ravine girt with cliffs, dripping with torrents under the dark shade of pines.'<sup>1</sup> In their frenzied dance the whole of nature joins, moon and stars take their part.<sup>2</sup> It is as the devotee of a similar ecstatic cult that Catullus' Attis seeks the recesses of the Phrygian forests, the haunt of hind and boar:

'Ubi cerva silvicolatrix, ubi aper nemorivagus,'

leaving behind him all that the Greek most valued in his sane and normal life:

'Genitoribus abero,  
abero foro palaestra stadio et gymnasiis.'

<sup>1</sup> ἄγκος ἀμφίκηρυμον, ὕδασι διάβροχον,  
πεύκαισι συσκιάζον.—EUR. *Bacch.* 1051.

<sup>2</sup> ὅτε καὶ Διὸς ἀστερωπὸς | ἀνεχέρευσεν αἰθῆρ,  
χορεύει δὲ σελάνα.—EUR. *Ion.* 1078.

Apart from such exceptional aberrations, and apart from the work of one or two exceptional poets like Aeschylus and Pindar, it must be allowed that the ancient view of Nature was somewhat prosaic and practical, showing a decided preference for fertile, habitable, and accessible country. We have seen that the Greek could describe the beauty of Nature in vivid and exact terms. That he had a sense for the 'magic of Nature' it would be more difficult to show. Matthew Arnold denies it to him and makes this gift a specially Celtic one. But it is not wholly absent from Greek poetry. Some such feeling found expression in the adjective ζᾱθεος, which seems to have meant not divine in quality, like θεῖος, or the property of a particular god, but 'haunted,' full of the presence of divine spirits.<sup>1</sup> Again, there was at least one natural object which the Greeks invested with some kind of 'magic,' or mystery: I mean a cave. We can feel this, I think, in the single Homeric epithet ἡεποειδῆς: more clearly in the description of the cave in

<sup>1</sup> Virgil succeeds in giving some such meaning to the Latin adjective 'divinus' in the line:

'Divinosque lacus et Averna sonantia silvis.'—*Aen.* III. 442.

Ithaca, in *Od.* xiii. : and perhaps still more unmistakably in the few words in which Aeschylus depicts the cave at Delphi, the hollow rock beloved of birds :

Κωρυκὶς πέτρα  
κοίλη, φιλορνις, δαιμόνων ἀναστροφή,<sup>1</sup>

where the last phrase is virtually equivalent to ζάθεος, an adjective which Euripides applies to the same scene :

ζάθεά τ' ἄντρα δράκοντος οὐ-  
ρειαί τε σκοπιαὶ θεῶν.<sup>2</sup>

Still harder would it be to trace in Greek Literature anything answering to Wordsworth's idea of Nature as a power which can refine and tranquillise the human spirit or dispense strength and solace to her votaries. The Greeks and Romans were quite familiar with the thought of Nature as a single Power or Being, more or less personified. But they do not often regard her as obviously beneficent, or as beneficent in this particular way. As early as the 5th century B.C., there was much discussion of the contrast between Nature and Artificiality or Convention (Φύσις and Συνθήκη): philosophical writings and fragments

<sup>1</sup> *Eumenides*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> *Phoenissae*, 232.

of the Old Comedy show that there was talk of a primitive or golden age of Nature in the remote past. But even if Nature had been thought of as ruling this age, that would still be something different from Wordsworth's notion of the beneficence of Nature as she is, here and now. And in fact the sovereignty of the golden age was given to other powers, to Justice (Δίκη or Astraea) or to Kronos. The most that we can say about the ancient world is that Nature, in fact, did for some of the more thoughtful of the Romans what she did for Wordsworth, though they did not put it into words or express it in the same way. Here and there, in writings of the imperial age, there are striking coincidences with modern language. In a Lucianic dialogue,<sup>1</sup> for example, we hear of the *παραμυθία*, comfort or solace which is derived from the sight of the country. Again, in the 'Orphic' hymn to Nature, a composition of disputable but probably rather late date, there are phrases which have a singularly modern if not specially Wordsworthian ring. Nature is addressed in the words, *κοινὴ μὲν πάντεσσιν, ἀκοινώνητε δὲ μούνη* (one of the most remarkable of a long series of similar contrasts): she

<sup>1</sup> Charidemos, ἡ περὶ κάλλους.

is a power with whom all have dealings, though none may clasp her hand or read her secret.

The transition to Rome suggests that we should at the outset attempt to summarise historically the progress which Greek Literature had made in the appreciation of Nature. Simple and unreflecting in Homer, but vivid and exact, the sense for natural beauty had become deeper and more subtle in the lyric poets: in the Attic drama it had found comparatively little scope, since the interest centred in human action, but it was not absent, and the language of the dramatists presents a remarkable contrast to that of Homer. Metaphor has taken the place of simile, that is, analogies or resemblances between human life and Nature are much more familiar and suggest themselves much more readily. The poet no longer draws a picture deliberately and then calls attention to a point of resemblance: he speaks boldly of the storm of battle, the fruit of evil deeds, the tide of calamity. In his feeling for Nature, as in many other respects, Euripides was an innovator and a leader. He brought into Greek Literature a new vein of romance

and sentiment, a more modern quality of thought. Man is now in some degree aware of his severance from Nature, he consciously strives to bridge the gulf, to resume communion with her. Euripides seems to have detached himself from the busy politics of Athens. If tradition may be trusted, he lived alone in a cave on Salamis, and he found a grave appropriately enough in the forest glades of Pieria.<sup>1</sup> He may perhaps be regarded as the first to court the society of Nature in her solitudes. Certainly he was a poet who could describe Nature with great charm and felicity: he touches her wilder aspects in the *Bacchae*, and in a passage from the lost *Phaethon* he has caught the very breath and hue of sunrise. After Euripides, the chief products of Greece in imaginative literature were Attic Comedy and Alexandrian Idyll, Elegy, and Epigram. In the fragments of the former there are utterances about the country—*ἀγρός, ἀγροί*—which suggest that it may have contained scenes or passages which, like one or two known to us in Aristophanes, revealed an acute sense for the charm of rustic life in Attica. But it dealt

<sup>1</sup> *χαῖρε μελαμπετάλοις, Εὐριπίδη, ἐν γυάλοιςιν*  
*Περὶ τὸν δὲ νυκτὸς ἔχων θάλαμον.*—*Anthol.*

mainly with city-life. In Alexandrian poetry Nature bulked more largely. If there is nothing very profound, there is much that is very modern in tone; graceful or melancholy fancies about Nature, attempts to interpret her moods or to use them as symbols for the moods of man. There is also that reaction against city-life which we find again at Rome and in modern times, the tendency to turn to the country for relief and recreation.

All this literature of Greece the Romans had before them when they first attempted imaginative writing. But they had much more than this to shape and direct their feeling for Nature and natural scenes. They were a people with a strong national life of its own, and in their ideals and traditions agriculture had an important place. They had a mythology very different from that of Greece, one in which rustic deities were more numerous and powerful, whether beneficent like Faunus and Pales, or dark and terrible like Diana Nemorensis, with her human sacrifices in the heart of the forest. Roman religion, again, included a belief in portents or prodigies, changes in Nature which had a significance for men. In the poets

this idea assumes forms which recall the legend of Atreus and Thyestes :

‘Ille etiam extincto miseratus Caesare Romam,  
cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine texit.’

But it would be a mistake to suppose that in its beginnings it was a highly imaginative or subtle belief. In some of its forms it became a mere piece of semi-political machinery. But in any case it is a striking feature of Roman thought, an idea not, it is true, unknown to Greece, but much less conspicuous there.

With these ancient feelings and associations to influence them, with the busy and exacting life of a great city to repel them towards the country, and with a large body of humane and philosophic thought, inherited from Greece, to enlarge and clarify their mental vision, the best of the Romans naturally arrived at a mental attitude which has more affinity with the thought of modern times. Cicero and Virgil are nearer to us, more easily realised as personalities than the great Greeks. They have not the originality, the inspiring insight, the vigour and artistic sense of the Greek masters. But their mental furniture is more like ours ; we feel that we could live with them and enjoy their society, without surprises and sudden

divergences. It is conspicuously so in regard to their view of country life. The poetry of Nature and the country which we find in Virgil, Horace, and Tibullus appeals to the modern mind almost more than anything else in the imaginative literature of Rome. Lucretius stands apart: he is an isolated genius, not a representative of his countrymen, and the poetic interest is mingled with the scientific in his work. He preceded Virgil and helped Virgil in many ways: in some ways he transcends him, he is more profoundly impressed by the larger aspects of Nature, the vastness of the universe, the complexity of natural processes, the ceaseless change and movement in the world's life. But Virgil is more of a pure poet, and the poetic elements which we set out to look for are found in him in very definite and beautiful forms.

Pictorial description of Nature, the exact delineation of her beauties, attains in Virgil to a high degree of excellence. The well-known description of a rainstorm in autumn (*Georg.* i. 322 f.) is a good example of his manner: the picture includes vivid touches which the poet has evidently observed for himself:

‘Cava flumina crescunt  
cum sonitu fervetque fretis spirantibus aequor.’

Some of the subtleties of Virgilian language, what seem at first sight inversions of natural expression, are perhaps accounted for by real subtlety of observation. A spectator on the shore sees 'the sea glide towards him with its ships'

'Adlabi classibus aequor.'<sup>1</sup>

When several objects are moving in the same direction over a smooth or homogeneous surface, the effect to the eye is that the whole is moving, surface and objects together. Was this the effect which Virgil meant to depict? Again, when the ships of Aeneas are making their way up the Tiber, it is said:

'Viridesque secant placido aequore silvas.'

Does this mean that the prow cleaves the reflection of the foliage in the water?<sup>2</sup> Commentators dispute the interpretation as too subtle, but they often challenge it on rather inadequate grounds. The question involved is the large one of Virgil's method in observing and delineating Nature.

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* x. 269.

<sup>2</sup> Ausonius describes the reflection of trees in the waters of the Moselle (*Idyl.* x. 189):

'Glaucus opaco  
respondet colli fluvijs, frondere videntur  
fluminei latices et palmite consitus amnis.'

With his descriptive power, Virgil combines a keen sense for the historical associations of scenery, for the memories of the past that cling about a wood or cliff or stream, and in this way he did for Italian scenery something like what Sir Walter Scott did for that of our island. This patriotic and historical feeling appears strongly in the splendid description of Italy in the second *Georgic*: it appears also in greater detail in the seventh book of the *Aeneid*, in the catalogue of Turnus' Italian allies, where many localities in Italy are described with great power and beauty in musical verse. Virgil has also at times something of the 'magic of Nature,' for he was sensitive to suggestions of the spiritual or supernatural. His use of the adjective 'divinus' has already been quoted. In a passage of the eighth book, he attaches this sense of mystery and awe to the Capitoline Hill, the future site of Rome:

'Hoc nemus, hunc, inquit, frondoso vertice collem,  
quis deus, incertum est, habitat deus.'<sup>1</sup>

The place is ζάθεος, δαιμόνων ἀναστροφή.

An instance of the 'pathetic fallacy' has been cited from the *Eclogues*. That the idea was no mere graceful fancy, derived from Theocritus, but

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* viii. 351.

one which appealed to Virgil's spirit and suggested itself naturally to him, seems to be shown by the fact of its recurrence in his epic, in a more serious context. When an Italian warrior departs for the field of battle, never to return, he is bewept by the wood and river and lake of his native place:

'Te nemus Anguitiae, vitrea te Fucinus unda,  
te liquidi flevire lacus.'<sup>1</sup>

Finally, Virgil has something of Wordsworth's attitude towards Nature, he is strongly attracted by the country, and he is prepared to find rest and satisfaction amid the hills and streams. He does not talk about 'Natura': the mode of expression is still partly mythological:

'Fortunatus et ille, deos qui novit agrestes  
Panaque Silvanumque senem Nymphasque sorores';<sup>2</sup>

but the enthusiasm is the same in kind as that of the modern poet:

'O qui me gelidis in vallibus Haemi  
sistat et ingenti ramorum protegat umbra!'

Much might be said about the treatment of Nature in other Roman poets, in Catullus, in Horace, in the post-Augustans, among whom

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vii. 759.

<sup>2</sup> *Georg.* ii. 493.

Statius is conspicuous for a gift of minute and exact observation not unlike that possessed by Virgil and Tennyson. Statius also gives us in the *Silvae* full and appreciative pictures of some of the beautiful country-seats of his friends. But we are concerned rather with general principles than with details, and it is sufficient to show that the Romans had a very real and widespread taste for the beauties of Nature, and a feeling for the country which was almost different in kind from that of the Greeks.

‘Urbis amatorem Fuscum salvere iubemus  
ruris amatores—’

Is it easy to translate this into Attic Greek? Does any phrase like ἀγρῶν ἐραστής really convey a similar meaning? ἀγροῖκος? ἀστικός? The Roman words seem to have a greater fulness of signification. The new sentiment has differentiated the Latin word from its literal Greek equivalent, and hence, we may infer, the poets did not stand alone in their feeling for the country: the idea was diffused through Roman society, familiar to all. If this were a doubtful inference, we could confirm it by turning from the poets to the prose-writers, among whom Pliny the Younger would perhaps appeal to us most as the repre-

sentative of an ardent and enlightened love of Nature. To him Nature is inspiring: his natural surroundings at his country seat stimulate his fancy and direct his pen. 'O mare, O litus, verum secretumque *μουσείον*, quam multa inventis, quam multa dictatis!' Seneca, too, has an enthusiasm for Nature, and we find him proposing to visit the wild districts of Bruttium and Lucania by way of change and relief. There may have been a little affectation in some utterances like these; we may be inclined to say that the Roman had no very sensitive or penetrating imagination, that what attracted him was often a very practical satisfaction, freedom from worry, and fresh air: but there is a great deal of evidence to show that his feeling for Nature was, on the whole, genuine enough, and not really unlike our own. He was a traveller, a tourist, and an admirer of scenery, to a far greater extent than the Greek had been, and it is only within the last century that he has been in these respects surpassed.

What, we may ask in conclusion, is the significance of the progress which we have been tracing? We have endeavoured, in bare and scanty outline, to follow some of the changes of

sentiment which have appeared in Greece, Rome, and modern Europe. What is the meaning of it all? Is it only that poets, with the example of their predecessors to help them, have devised more and more ingenious ways of amusing and entertaining their readers? Has anything of value been arrived at, or are we to dismiss many of the ideas as merely untrue and illusory—the belief in Faunus and Silvanus, for instance, or the ‘Pathetic Fallacy’? It would be a very barren and discouraging theory of Man and Nature that could find in the series nothing but an advance in weaving fanciful conceits, and it would also be a view very derogatory to the poet, and not in the least borne out by a true history of civilisation. The more serious theory is the truer one. Man has been at all times vaguely and instinctively aware that the Nature which confronts him or surrounds him is a power not really alien or hostile: he may never know her face to face, she may be ultimately ἀκινώνητος, in the phrase of the Orphic hymn: but the suspicion grows that if anything necessarily remained unknown it would not be worth knowing: in her works and laws she is sufficiently revealed. Each age wrests something of her



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secret from her, each age requires a new interpretation of man's relation to her : the man of science deciphers her mechanism and finds a formula for it : the interpretation must be given by the philosopher or the poet.



## II.

### THE BELIEFS OF THE GREEKS AND ROMANS CONCERNING A LIFE AFTER DEATH.<sup>1</sup>

ἀλλ' ὅ,τι τοῦ ζῆν φιλτερον ἄλλο  
σκότος ἀμπίσχων κρύπτει νεφέλαις·  
δυσέρωτες δὴ φαινόμεθ' ὄντες  
τοῦδ' ὅ,τι τοῦτο στίλβει κατὰ γῆν,  
δι' ἀπειροσύνην ἄλλου βίτου  
κούκ ἀπόδειξιν τῶν ὑπὸ γαίας,  
μύθοις δ' ἄλλως φερόμεσθα.

EURIPIDES, *Hippolytus*, 191-197.

'HAVE we any means of discovering,' it may be asked, 'what the ancients really thought and felt on a subject like this? We have hints and isolated utterances of poets, and the speculations of particular philosophers. But what

<sup>1</sup> A Lecture intended as an 'Introduction to the Study of *Aeneid VI*.' I am indebted for some ideas and materials to the following books, among others: Rohde's *Psyche*; an Essay in Lehrs' *Populäre Aufsätze aus dem Alterthum*; Coulanges, *La Cité Antique*; Preller's *Römische Mythologie*.

did the people really believe, what did the average Greek or Roman hold to be true? How strong and how widely diffused was the belief in a future life?’

Evidence is not altogether lacking. It is of various kinds. A great many sepulchral inscriptions, and some sepulchral reliefs, are preserved. Customs and rites are known: for example, the custom of bringing offerings of food and drink to the tomb. Such rites imply a belief: not necessarily a strong one in all who practise them, but a belief which had at some time been strong and general. Again, popular language is preserved for us incidentally by poets or other writers. In a fragment of Aristophanes<sup>1</sup> a speaker is contending that revelry and joy await the dead; and he appeals to the common phrase, ‘The Blessed One:’ ὁ μακαρίτης, ἡ μακαρίτις, he or she who is now in bliss, meant the departed, like ‘der Selige’ in German.<sup>2</sup> The Latin word ‘Manes’ has been derived from an adjective ‘manus,’ pure, bright or good,

<sup>1</sup> Ταγηνιστά, Fr. 488 (Ed. Kock), l. 10: πᾶς γὰρ λέγει τις ‘ὁ μακαρίτης ὄχεται.’

<sup>2</sup> Rohde thinks that this expression belonged specially to Attica. But it occurs in Theocritus (τροφὸς ὁ μακαρίτης, *Idyl.* ii. 70).

and its Greek equivalent in inscriptions is *χρηστοί*. Such pieces of evidence, however—words, customs, or current ideas—must not be overestimated; and for a general view it is perhaps safer to go to the poets and men of letters. Greek poetry in many of its forms, and, in a lesser degree, Roman poetry, appealed to the people more directly than most modern poetry does; it was full of national sentiment, and it reflected popular ideas, though no doubt in a higher and more subtle form. The general spirit and mood of the poets may fairly be taken as representative. Now that spirit is on the whole one of contentment with life on earth. In moments of trouble the Greek sometimes wishes that he had never been born;<sup>1</sup> but as a rule he finds the present life full of activity and interest, and thinks but little of a life to come. Plato's picture of the old age of Cephalus in the *Republic* is a very natural one, and impresses us with its truth. Cephalus says that when a man draws near to the end of his days he begins to be anxious and troubled

<sup>1</sup> *μη φῦναι τὸν ἅπαντα νικᾷ λόγον κ. τ. λ.* (SOPH. *Oed. Col.* 1225). The same sentiment had previously been expressed by Theognis, 425 f.

about things of which he never thought before ;<sup>1</sup> he is tormented by a doubt whether there may not be some truth after all in the tales or μῦθοι told about Hades. Popular belief was probably very vague and uncertain. People are not at one, Aristotle says, ἀμφιδοξοῦσι, regarding the survival of the soul. And popular belief, such as it was, was alloyed with curious superstitions : there was, for instance, the idea mentioned by Plato, that if a man died while a gale of wind was blowing, his soul ran a risk of being blown away and dispersed altogether !

When Virgil came to compose his sixth *Aeneid*, there was ample material before him in custom and tradition and in the poetry and philosophy of preceding centuries. The idea of the whole, the epic framework or outline, came from Homer. But much had happened since Homer's day. New ideas had been developed or imported ; and the Homeric poems, it is probable, do not even present completely the beliefs that then existed. The picture drawn by Homer<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> εἰσέρχεται αὐτῷ θεὸς καὶ φροντὶς περὶ ὧν ἔμπροσθεν οὐκ εἰσήει (*Rep.* i. p. 330, D.).

<sup>2</sup> I say 'Homer' for the sake of brevity, without intending to assert single authorship. It is less cumbersome than 'the author or authors of the Homeric poems.'

of the state of the dead is not a very attractive or inspiring one. In the *Iliad*, when a hero falls, his soul passes under earth 'like a wreath of vapour'; in the *Odyssey*, Odysseus finds the shades or spirits collected in a gloomy region beyond the Ocean Stream. Homer, as Plato insisted, makes death repulsive, a thing likely to unnerve the combatant. It is but a feeble and almost unconscious life that the  $\psi\upsilon\chi\alpha\iota$  possess; and with the exception of the privileged Tiresias, they have no knowledge of what is happening on earth, and no power to control events, to help their surviving kindred or take vengeance on their foes. Of reward for a good life led on earth, or punishment for a bad one, there is scarcely a hint. The Powers below punish the special offence of perjury, we learn from one passage in the *Iliad*.<sup>1</sup> But in the realm which Odysseus sees there are no regions set apart for the good and for the wicked. Tityus, Sisyphus, and Tantalus, it is true, suffer punishment; but these are exceptional offenders against the gods, punished in Hades because their punishment must be unending, not

<sup>1</sup> *Il.* iii. 278. The verb is dual ( $\tau\iota\nu\sigma\theta\omicron\nu$ ), meaning presumably Pluto and Persephone.

ordinary wrong-doers.<sup>1</sup> In another book of the *Odyssey*, it is said that Menelaus will not die, but will be transported 'to the Elysian plain and the furthest ends of the earth': he is the son-in-law of Zeus, and specially favoured by the gods. The propitiation of the shade of Patroclus by Achilles perhaps implies the power of the dead to resent a slight and to injure the living: 'Be not wroth with me, Patroclus, if you hear in Hades that I have accepted a ransom for Hector.' But these are exceptional and isolated things. The prevailing Homeric view is that the dead are powerless, and that they are neither rewarded nor punished for the life they have led on earth. When the body is consumed by fire, the wraith or shade departs to the realm of spirits to return no more.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from Homer, there are three forms or phases of belief to be considered, all of which are to some extent utilised by Virgil. First, there is Hero-worship and the cult of the dead, implying, at least in early times, the idea that

<sup>1</sup> According to some critics, they are typical sufferers, and the passage dates from the sixth century, when 'Orphic' ideas were in the air. It seems a safer view to suppose that they are *not* typical.

<sup>2</sup> //, xxiii. 75.

the soul of the dead man resides in the tomb—not in a distant Hades—to be there propitiated with offerings in due season by his descendants. Secondly, there were the Mysteries of Eleusis and the beliefs connected with them, involving the idea of a happy future for the initiated. Thirdly, Orphic doctrines and Orphic rites or τελεταί, in which the notion of expiation or atonement was conspicuous: sin and punishment, purchasable indemnity, and the Pythagorean transmigration of souls. Besides these beliefs or institutions, philosophy exerted a great influence, and the writings of Plato in particular disseminated the idea that the soul is ‘immortal,’ that is, not merely surviving at death, but of divine nature, indestructible and existing for ever. Cleombrotus of Ambracia hurled himself from a lofty wall and perished, not because he found the ills of life unbearable, but because he had read the *Phaedo* of Plato! This is related in an epigram of Callimachus,<sup>1</sup> and the truth of the story may be doubted. Philosophy, further, exerted an influence on both sides; there were not only believers in

<sup>1</sup> ἄξιον οὐδὲν ἰδὼν θανάτου κακόν, ἀλλὰ Πλάτωνος  
ἐν τῷ περὶ ψυχῆς γράμμῃ ἀναλεξάμενος.—CALL. ΕΡ. xxv.

a future life, but sceptics also and earnest opponents of the belief, like Lucretius. To Lucretius the belief in a future life is an evil, filling men's minds with baseless terror: that he denounces it with such force and ardour has been taken as an indication that it was of considerable strength and widely prevalent.

#### 1. HERO WORSHIP AND THE CULT OF THE DEAD.

The payment of rites and offerings to the shade of an ancestor or a great man of the past is a conspicuous feature in Greek and Roman life. The dead is a powerful spirit who exacts reverence and resents neglect,<sup>1</sup> who can help or injure his descendants. 'Aid us against Aegisthus,' is the appeal of Orestes, 'for only thus will the due feasts be spread for thee.'<sup>2</sup> The appeal is made at the tomb: the dead are there, near the living, not distant, like the gods in Olympus. In the *Helena* of

<sup>1</sup> καὶ τεθνεὺς καὶ τάριχος ἐὼν πρὸς θεῶν δύναμιν ἔχει τὸν ἀδικίῳτα τίνεσθαι.—*Herod.* ix. 120.

<sup>2</sup> οὕτω γὰρ ἂν σοι δαίτες ἐννομοὶ βροτῶν  
κτισθῶσι, εἰ δὲ μὴ, κ.τ.λ.—*ÆEs. Choeph.* 481.

Euripides, Menelaus prays to the shade of the late king of Egypt: 'O sire that dwellest in this tomb of stone.'<sup>1</sup> In an ode of Pindar,<sup>2</sup> the ancestors in their tombs by the σκυρπὰ ὁδός or 'paved way' at Cyrene hear with the senses of the dead (χθονία φρενί) the procession-song which celebrates their descendant's victory. The idea appears in Virgil in the phrase 'animamque sepulchro condimus' (*Aen.* iii. 67)—we lay the *soul* to rest in its tomb. The word for a powerful shade or ghost thus worshipped was ἥρως. The plural ἥρωες is in inscriptions the equivalent of the Roman 'Lares.' In Homer the word meant a great living chief or warrior, and Virgil sometimes reproduces this usage; but, apart from epic tradition, its meaning had greatly changed. There are three grades of existence or classes of beings: θεοί, ἥρωες, ἄνθρωποι. The ἥρωες have a peculiar cult of their own, quite distinct from the worship of the Olympians. The word for it is ἐναγίζεω or 'parentare,' not θύειν or 'sacrificare.' The victim was usually a black<sup>3</sup> male beast; and when it was struck with the knife, the head

<sup>1</sup> ὦ γέρον, ὃς οἰκεῖς τῶνδε λάων τάφον.—*Hel.* 962.

<sup>2</sup> *Pyth.* v. 101.

<sup>3</sup> 'Duc nigras pecudes.'—*Aen.* vi. 153.

was held downwards towards the earth, not up to heaven. In Greek the word for the altar also was different, *ἑσχάρα* and not *βωμός*; in Latin the word 'ara' had to serve for both.<sup>1</sup> The offerings were 'inferiae.' The *ἑσχάρα* was a round, hollow structure, not closed at its base; the blood was poured into it, to sink into the ground and reach the dead who lie below. An altar of this form has been found at Mycenae; and it proves, if proof were wanted, that Homer's conception of the dead was not the earliest or the universal one. Homer seems to ignore the worship of the dead,<sup>2</sup> unless the blood offered to the shades by Odysseus be a reminiscence of it; that he came to ignore it is due, it has been suggested, to the fact that he and his hearers were colonists

<sup>1</sup> 'Stant manibus arae,' *Aen.* iii. 62; offerings to the dead, *ib.* 66-67 (milk and blood); 'tumulo sollemnia mittent,' *Aen.* vi. 380.

<sup>2</sup> More exactly, Homer seems to know some of the facts, but to ignore this aspect of them. There are the games in honour of Patroclus. There is the offering of a lock of hair; but it was meant for Spercheus, and is offered in a spirit of defiance and despair. There is the slaughter before the pyre of the twelve Trojan captives; but the shade of Patroclus is not invited to drink the blood, as the shade of Achilles is in Euripides:—*ἐλθέ δ' ὡς πῖψις μέλαν | κόρηι ἀκραϊφνὲς αἶμα', δ σοι δωροῦμεθα* (*Hecuba*, 536).

who had left behind them in Europe the tombs of their ancestors. The memory of their deeds remained and became the theme of epic song, but the rites paid to their shades had ceased.

The notion that the spirit resides in the tomb was not, however, consistently maintained. Primitive belief may have condemned the dead for ever to that narrow home; but in later times the idea is only a survival, subsisting along with the inconsistent notion of a common realm of Hades or, for the greatest of the dead, the Islands of the Blest. Elysium had been spoken of by Homer as the final home of Menelaus. Hesiod sends to the *Μακάρων Νῆσοι* the heroes of Thebes and Troy, and thither, too, in Attic song, went the liberators of their country: 'Surely not dead art thou, Harmodius dear, but in the Isles of Bliss hast now thy home, with swift Achilles and brave Diomedes'—

*φίλταθ' Ἀρμόδι', οὐ τι πον τέθνηκας  
νήσοις δ' ἐν μακάρων σέ φασιν εἶναι.*

As time went on, the privilege was extended. The word *ἥρως* gained a wider application, until

in late times it comes to be used of the dead generally: ἥρως χρηστέ, χαίρε, 'Farewell, good hero,' is a common form of salutation to the departed. The μακάρων νῆσοι became accessible to all. This, however, is a quite late development, and it is often rather a poetic fancy or a pious wish than a serious belief.<sup>1</sup>

It is to the Islands of the Blest in the Western Sea, and not to Olympus above,<sup>2</sup> that the souls of the heroes make their way. They are not admitted to the company of the gods: only a few favoured sons of Zeus, Heracles and Dionysus and Pollux, ascend, like Romulus at Rome, to heaven. Genuine Greek sentiment did not deify a great king after his death, or the ancestor of

<sup>1</sup> οὐκ ἔθανες, Πρώτη, μετέβης δ' ἐς ἀμείνονα χῶρον,

καὶ ταῖς μακάρων νήσοις θαλίῃ ἐνὶ πολλῇ.—*Anthol.* App. 278.

There is nothing specifically Christian in this epitaph, but it may have been influenced by Christian beliefs. This is almost certainly the case when a soul is thought of as going to heaven (e.g. *Anthol.* vii. 672; in 673, another epitaph for the same person, the Christian influence is more obvious).

<sup>2</sup> In a well-known epigram (αλερέ, τίπτε βέβηκας, κ.τ.λ., *Anthol. Pal.* vii. 62), the soul of Plato is thought of as ascending to Olympus. Philosophic thought in some of its forms did contemplate the ascent of the soul to highest heaven: there was the theory of a pure element of fiery ether, from which the soul was derived, and to which it returned—πνεῦμα μὲν πρὸς αἰθέρα | τὸ σῶμα δ' ἐκ αὐτοῦ

a great family. Pindar and Bacchylides never suggest such a future for Hiero or Thero. It was the Orientalised Greek of the decadence who made a king into a god after his death, or even in his life. Hence came the deification of the Roman emperors, a thing not accounted for by the worship of the Heroes, but more extravagant than that, since Julius and his successors were numbered among the gods of heaven.<sup>1</sup>

Thus distinguished from the gods of Olympus on the one hand, the heroes are also quite distinct from the ordinary dead on the other. Their worship is more elaborate, more like that of the gods of the earth, the *χθόνιοι θεοί*.<sup>2</sup> They are more powerful, more divine, protectors of the land.<sup>3</sup> The dead might not be buried within

<sup>1</sup> So Horace associates Augustus with Hercules or Pollux:—

‘Hac arte Pollux et vagus Hercules  
enisis arces attigit igneas,  
quos inter Augustus recumbens  
purpureo bibit ore nectar.’—*Odes* iii. 3, 9.

‘Romulus et Liber pater et cum Castore Pollux’—*Epp.* ii. 1, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *μυκάρες χθόνιοι*, *Choeph.* 474, seems to mean the deceased Pelopidae.

<sup>3</sup> A ship is sent to Aegina ‘to fetch the Aeacidae’ before the battle of Salamis. Echetlos and Theseus appear at Marathon.

the house, not even within the city ; but a hero's grave may be by the hearth, or under the altar of a god, or in the ἀγορά. The offerings brought to the dead consist of wine, milk, and honey. Like the heroes, they can influence the fortunes of the living ; but if the rites of burial are duly paid and the offerings brought in due season, they do not return to haunt the upper earth. They returned only at a special festival. In Attica, the last days of the Anthesteria, in early spring, were set apart for the dead : feasts were prepared for them, and they were supposed to be present. At the close of the festival they were bidden to depart, θύραζε, Κῆρες, οὐκέτ' Ἀνθεστῆρια, 'Go hence, ye shades, the revels now are ended.' The corresponding celebration at Rome was the Lemuria in May, a festival lasting for three days during which the spirits revisited their earthly homes : at the end of the time the master of the house performs various rites and bids them depart, saying nine times, 'Manes exite paterni.'<sup>1</sup> Apart from this regular and licensed visitation, the dead return only to claim redress for some bitter wrong or to haunt the wrongdoer. So Dido threatens to haunt the faithless Aeneas :

<sup>1</sup> Ovid, *Fasti*, v. 419 f.

'omnibus umbra locis adero.'<sup>1</sup> The wrong, as we have seen, was often the refusal of fire or burial, as in the case of Patroclus.

The cult of heroes and of the dead in Greece and at Rome was closely bound up with the coherence of the family, the continuity of the *γένος* and the *gens*. The payment of rites to a common ancestor was one of the oldest and strongest bonds of union. Wider communities, whose descent from the same ancestor was fictitious or at best unprovable, adopted this symbol of intimate association. Practitioners of a craft thought of themselves vaguely as descendants of its founder ('*Ἀσκληπιάδαι*, for example, and so, perhaps, '*Ὀμηρίδαι*'). The new Attic tribes founded by Clisthenes looked upon their *ἐπώνυμοι* as ancestors (*ἀρχηγοί*).

## 2. ELEUSIS.

The cult of the dead was concerned mainly with the propitiation of them and with render-

<sup>1</sup>*Aen.* iv. 386. There is a similar threat in Hor. *Epodes* v. 92 f.—

'nocturnus occurram furor,  
petamque voltus umbra curvis unguibus,  
quae vis deorum est Manium.'

Valerius Flaccus expressly mentions this privilege of the dead—

'patet ollis ianua leti  
atque iterum remeare licet.'—*Argon.* iii. 386.

ing to them their dues ; in a word, with their relation to the living. Of the existence which was theirs it had little to tell ; and when it lost its hold upon men's minds—as in the case of Homer and his audience—there remained something very shadowy and unsatisfactory : 'Comfort me not about death, Odysseus, for I would rather be the meanest of serfs on the earth above than king over all the vanished dead below.' The desire for something better, happier, and more tangible was satisfied in some degree by the rites or mysteries (*ῥηγια, δρησμοσύνη ἱερῶν*) which Demeter herself, according to the Homeric Hymn, had shown to the princes of Eleusis.

The *χθόνιοι θεοί* or gods of the earth—of whom Homer with his aristocratic Olympian *ῥεία ζῶντες* knows so little—were the gods of a peaceful, settled, agricultural population, of inland districts rather than of maritime towns. From the earth came the corn and the vines : in the earth reposed the bones of the dead. So these gods, Dionysus, and Demeter with her daughter Persephone, have a double function ; they are the gods of the vintage and the harvest-home, and they receive into their charge

departed souls. Zeus *χθόνιος* and Hermes are associated with them. Not one god, but a group of gods is revered at Eleusis. At Rome, Tellus and Ceres, with Dis Pater form the group of gods of the earth. Terra or Tellus is Mania and Mater Larum, the mother of kindly spirits and of the glorified dead. The Lares appear to have been originally gods of the country, and accordingly we find them appealed to in the song of the Arval brothers.

The worship of the gods of the earth somehow acquired a deeper moral and spiritual significance than that of the Olympian gods. Eleusis had been united with Athens in the seventh century before Christ; in the sixth, when political troubles and the beginning of scepticism had darkened men's outlook on the world and had created a demand for spiritual consolation, the Eleusinian Mysteries began to acquire influence and importance throughout Greece. In the course of time, Eleusis came to be regarded as the holy place of Hellas and the world's sanctuary, 'hallowed ground, a place of worship common to the whole earth, wherein is centred all that is most divine for men, at once the brightest and the most awe-

inspiring of all places'—nowhere were the raptures of the Blest or the terrors of the Unseen World more vividly impressed upon mortals.<sup>1</sup> During the festival there was a religious truce, a suspension of warfare in Greece, as there was for the Olympian games and other great gatherings. There was no barrier of rank or race. Slaves were admitted.<sup>2</sup> The only condition was Greek speech, *τὴν φωνὴν Ἑλλήνας εἶναι*. The murderer and the homicide, *ἀνδροφόνοι*, were excluded; they however were excluded from any religious celebration.

The Mysteries themselves seem to have consisted mainly in some sort of dramatic spectacle: 'what is seen' or 'acted' at Eleusis is the phrase by which they are described, *τὰ ὁρώμενα* or *τὰ δρώμενα*. There was probably but little dogmatic teaching, little or nothing that could be expressed, or treacherously revealed, in words. 'Aristotle holds that it is properly a matter of feeling or emotion, of putting the spectator into a

<sup>1</sup> *κοινὸν τι γῆς τέμενος ἢ Ἐλευσίς καὶ πάντων ὅσα θεῖα ἀνθρώποις, ἅμα παιδρότατον δὲ καὶ φρικωδέστατον (Aristides).*

<sup>2</sup> The expense incurred for *μήσεις* δυοῖν τῶν δημοσίων stands recorded on stone—for the initiation of two of the slaves owned by the State.

certain frame of mind—provided he is capable of receiving the impression—not of instructing him in theories or doctrines.<sup>1</sup> Probably the story of Demeter was presented in some way, the loss of her daughter, her grief and anger and despair, followed by restoration and joy. Different spectators would read different meanings into such a vision. But it can hardly have been *merely* symbolic—a transparent allegory of the planting of the seed and the renewal of vegetation, or of the burial of the body and survival of the soul: to suppose that would be to go against analogy and precedent in Greek religion and to make the presentation dogmatic or doctrinal after all. The result was for the initiated the favour of the powers who rule below: when he had to die, he would go to the other world with a more assured hope of happiness. This is expressly stated in extant words of Pindar and Sophocles: ‘Thrice happy they who have seen these rites before they go to Hades’ realm: they alone have true life, for others there is nought but

<sup>1</sup> Ἀριστοτέλης ἀξιοῖ τοὺς τελουμένους ‘οὐ μαθεῖν τι δεῖν ἀλλὰ παθεῖν καὶ διατεθῆναι,’ δηλονότι ‘γενομένους ἐπιτηδείους’.—ARISTOTLE, *Frag.* ed. Rose, i. 15.

tribulation.<sup>1</sup> For the chosen souls of the initiated there is sunshine again beneath the earth. 'Cheerful light is ours,' sing the Mystae in the *Frogs*, 'ours and ours alone.'<sup>2</sup> 'The sun shines for them when it is night here, and in meadows full of glowing roses they disport themselves before their city's gates.' They

watch the chariot whirl  
about the goal again, and hunters race  
the shadowy lion, and the warrior-kings,  
in height and prowess more than human, strive  
again for glory, while the golden lyre  
is ever sounding in heroic ears  
heroic hymns, and every way the vales  
wind, clouded with the grateful incense-fume  
of those who mix all odours to the gods  
on one far height in one far-shining fire.<sup>3</sup>

'A sun their own they know and stars their own'—solemque suum, sua sidera norunt—this

<sup>1</sup> τρισόλβια

κεῖνοι βροτῶν οἱ ταῦτα δερχθέντες τέλη  
μόλωσ' ἐς Αἰδου· τοῖσδε γὰρ μόνοις ἐκεῖ

ἤν' ἔστι, τοῖς δ' ἄλλοισι πάντ' ἐκεῖ κακά.—SOPH. Fr. 753.

So Pindar: δλβιος δοτις ιδῶν ἐκεῖνα κολᾶν εἰσιν ὑπὸ χθόνα.  
Both poets speak of *seeing* the rites (δερχθέντες, ιδῶν).

<sup>2</sup> μόνοις γὰρ ἡμῖν ἥλιος

καὶ φέγγος Ἰλαρὸν ἔστιν.—*Frogs*, 454-455.

<sup>3</sup> Pindar's *θρήνος*, which inspired these lines, may have been composed for an *Athenian*. Tennyson is perhaps not quite consistently Pindaric or Eleusinian in his imagery. 'The

was one of the golden strands woven by Virgil into the fabric of his poetry, one of the visions that make up his great and complex picture—so unlike the Homeric *véκνια*—of the world below.

Thus Eleusis supplied what the cult of the dead did not give, and what the Homeric Hades excluded—a brighter prospect after death. But it did not give this expressly or solely as the reward of righteousness. The Mystae in Aristophanes, it is true, speak of themselves as ‘we who have been initiated and have led a righteous life.’<sup>1</sup> But initiation was the primary condition. Aristophanes himself shows us another aspect of the matter in the *Peace*, where Trygaeus, in peril of his life, tries to borrow three drachmae to buy a pig for sacrifice: ‘I really must be initiated before I die.’<sup>2</sup> The cynic Diogenes is reported

shadowy lion’ recalls the Homeric Heracles *θήρας ὁμοῦ εἰλεῦντα*. Tennyson’s mode of fusing poetic ideas is quite like that of his master Virgil.

<sup>1</sup> ὅσοι μεμνήμεθ’ ἐν—  
σεβῇ τε διήγομεν  
τρόπον περὶ τοὺς ξένους  
καὶ τοὺς ἰδιώτας.—*Frogs*, 456 f.

<sup>2</sup> ἐς χοιρίδιόν μοι νῦν δάνεισον τρεῖς δραχμὰς·  
δεῖ γὰρ μνηθῆναι με πρὶν τεθνηκέναι.—*Peace*, 374.

to have expressed surprise at the idea that initiation could be all in all. 'What?' said he, 'do you tell me that Pataecion the thief, because he happens to have been initiated, will fare better when he is dead than Epameinondas?'<sup>1</sup>

### 3. 'ORPHIC' BELIEFS AND RITES.

The mythical bard and prophet Orpheus, the 'Threicius sacerdos' of the Virgilian Elysium, gives a name to a cult of Dionysus which was in many ways different from that of Eleusis. Both worships came to the Greeks from Thrace. But the Eleusinian Iakchos was a softened and hellenized Dionysus. Ecstatic phrenzy and the rending of raw flesh had no place in his worship. The Orphic Dionysus retained more of the characteristics of his origin. The sleepless Bacchant on the mountains of Thrace or Phrygia—the 'ex-somnis Euias' of Horace's phrase<sup>2</sup>—saw what human eyes might not see, and did what human hands unaided could not do; in *μανία* or *ἔκστασις*

<sup>1</sup> τί λέγεις; εἶπεν, κρείττονα μοῖραν ἔξει Παταικίων ὁ κλέπτης ἀποθανὼν ἢ Ἐπαμεινώνδας, ὅτι μεμύηται;—PLUT. *Mor.* p. 21 F.

<sup>2</sup> *Odes* III. xxv. 9.

was revealed a power stronger and more permanent than the bodily frame. From the North there came to the Greeks strange ideas of the soul and of the reality of a future life. Herodotus speaks of Getae who believe in immortality (Γέται οἱ ἀθανατίζοντες),<sup>1</sup> and he relates how a tribe called Trausoi welcome a new-born infant with lamentation and make rejoicing over death. Euripides, or one of his characters, in a moment of despondency, approves of this idea.<sup>2</sup> But that the other world could be the *more* real of the two—that life is death and death new life, τὸ ζῆν μὲν ἐστὶ κατθανεῖν, τὸ κατθανεῖν δὲ ζῆν ἐκεῖ νομίζεται—was never anything but a paradox to ordinary Greek sentiment.

The Ὀρφικοί or devotees of Orpheus were not representative Greeks at all. The worship of the Thracian Dionysus was at first practised by secret societies or θίασοι of foreigners: the rites were altogether unrecognised by the State. There is no trace of Orphic ideas in Homer or Hesiod, no certain and conspicuous appearance of them at all events. Their importance begins

<sup>1</sup> iv. 93, 94

<sup>2</sup> ἐχρῆν γὰρ ἡμᾶς σύλλογον ποιουμένους

τὸν φύντα θρηνεῖν κ.τ.λ.—*Cresphontes*, Fr. 452.

in the latter half of the sixth century. Athens was at this time beginning to attract to itself whatever was stirring in the intellectual world of Greece. Among other things, Orphic worship found its way thither, represented by Onomacritus and other editors of oracles (*διαθέται χρησμῶν*); but its chief seat was in Southern Italy and Sicily, where it came into association with Pythagorean philosophy. The Orphic system included and was based upon what the public and current religion of Greece lacked—strict dogmatic teaching.

It was a strange, mystic, and semi-philosophical creed, full of symbolism and theocrasia or the fusion of many gods in one. The world is now ruled by Dionysus, the sixth and last of a series. He was preceded by Zeus, Kronos, and Uranos, and before these came Phanes and Nyx. Born of Zeus and Persephone, Dionysus in infancy is destined to supreme godship by his father. But the Titans, incited by Hera, entrap him and tear him to pieces, seizing him in the form of a bull, which he had assumed to escape them. They eat all of him but the heart, which is rescued by Athena and swallowed by Zeus. From Zeus a new Dionysus or Zagreus springs,

the son of Zeus and Semele. The Titans are destroyed by the thunderbolts of Zeus, and from their ashes the human race is made. Such are the outlines of the story, and in some such form it was related by Onomacritus (extant Orphic writings are of much later date, but the *κεραύνεος* of the Titans is known to have been told in his verses). The rending of Dionysus signified the dispersion of the divine being into the multifarious shapes of finite existence, the breaking up of the white light into the rainbow hues of the visible world. The dispersion is effected by a crime, an act of violence—finite, earthly existence is implicitly condemned. The Titans are the embodiment of evil. In man there is an evil element derived from them, and a good principle derived from Dionysus whom they had consumed.

This was the Orphic theology or theogony. The duty of man was to free himself from the Titanic element, to escape from the dominion of the body, which was the 'prison' or 'tomb' of the soul, the *σῶμα* was really a *σῆμα*.<sup>1</sup> The unregenerate, unpurified soul was condemned to

<sup>1</sup> 'neque auras  
respiciunt, clausi tenebris et carcere caeco.'

—VIRGIL, *Aen.* vi. 734.



*THE BELIEF IN A LIFE AFTER DEATH* 61

perpetual re-embodiment on earth, ἐνσωμάτωσις : brought at death before a bar of judgment below, the soul was detained for a time in the other world, undergoing punishment and purification, and it then returned to earth to suffer in turn what it had inflicted upon others. Only by a strictly righteous life, by adherence to the Orphic rules, and by ceremonies of expiation, could the spirit hope to escape from a never-ending cycle of earthly lives and attain to rest and peace.<sup>1</sup> Here we come in sight of the abuses denounced by Plato—for the Orphic, like the Eleusinian worship, had its lower and more sordid aspect—the sale of indulgences, the practice of expiatory rites by itinerant priests at a small cost, λύσεις, καθαρμοί or τελεταί sanctioned by the λύσιοι θεοί or Dionysus Λύσιος. It would seem that release might be purchased for the misdeeds of others—of ancestors, for example—as well as for a man's own.<sup>2</sup>

Besides its foundation in dogmatic teaching, the Orphic system thus possesses several features which are absent or inconspicuous in the popular

<sup>1</sup> κύκλου τε λῆξαι καὶ ἀναπνεῦσαι κακότητος.

<sup>2</sup> λύσει προγόνων ἀθεμίστων  
μαίόμενοι.

religion of Greece. It is secret and exclusive; admission to it is a special privilege; it draws a line of distinction similar to that between the Church and the World, the 'saved' and the 'unsaved.' (In this, however, it does not stand quite alone: Eleusis does the same thing.) Secondly, it exacts submission: a man cannot save himself. He must sit at the feet of Orpheus and the Orphic priests. Thirdly, its rules are ascetic, it enjoins abstinence from certain things, especially from the eating of flesh.<sup>1</sup> Fourthly, it has the idea of Judgment, of systematic Reward and Punishment which we have seen to be absent, or all but entirely absent, from the Homeric conception of a future life.<sup>2</sup>

Some of the Orphic ideas find expression in the poets of Greece. Aeschylus speaks of the

<sup>1</sup> ἤδη νυν αἶψα καὶ δι' ἀψύχου βορᾶς  
σίτοις καπῆλευ', Ὀρφέα τ' ἀνακτ' ἔχων  
βάκχευε, πολλῶν γραμμάτων τιμῶν καπνοῦς.

—EUR. *Hippol.* 952-954.

<sup>2</sup> The punishment of Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Tityus has been already discussed. Homer introduces Minos θεμιστεύοντα νέκυσσι, *ius dicentem*; but there is no hint that he is trying men for their lives on earth—he seems to be merely repeating in the world of shadows what was his function in life above. Homer also knows Tartarus as a place of punishment or a prison; but it is the prison of the rebel Titans, not of men, and it is quite distinct from Hades, 'as far below Hades as Heaven is above the Earth.'

Judgment Seat below: there is 'another Zeus' who pronounces the 'last sentence' upon wrong.<sup>1</sup> Pindar is more or less Orphic or Pythagorean in much that he says about the soul. In his *θρῆνοι* he naturally gave more scope to such reflections than in his odes of victory: in one of them he spoke of 'expiation for an ancient wrong'—*ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος*—accepted by Persephone:<sup>2</sup> after nine years, *ἐνάτῳ ἔτει*, the souls are sent up to lead a great and prosperous life on earth. In the second Olympian ode he describes at length and with much splendour of imagery the destination of the soul. Thero, to whom this ode is addressed, was an old man, perhaps, like Cephalus, beginning to think about the life to come; interested too, it may be, in the worship of the *χθόνιοι θεοί*, which was prevalent in Sicily—his town Acragas is the 'seat of Persephone,' *Φερσεφόνας ἔδος*. In the poet's conception, the *λύσις* or release is a lofty and moral one. Final happiness is attained after persistent abstinence from all wrongdoing (*ἀπὸ πάμπαν ἀδίκων ἔχειν ψυχάν*) in more than one existence.

<sup>1</sup> *κάκει δικάζει τὰμπλακῆμαθ' ὡς λόγος, Ζεὺς ἄλλος ἐν καμοῦσιν ὑστάτας δίκας.*—*Συγγλ.* 236.

<sup>2</sup> *πένθος*, sorrow or bereavement, seems to mean here a deed which plunged a whole family in gloom.

The picture which he draws of the life of the Blest is perhaps as much Eleusinian as Orphic. For the righteous there is sunshine below and fair environment, 'unlaborious earth and oarless sea.' The final consummation is to travel by the road of Zeus to the Tower of Kronos in the *μακάρων νῆσοι*—this presumably after the last life on earth of the finally purified soul.<sup>1</sup> What Pindar gives us is poetry and not dogma. Like Virgil and Tennyson, he combines elements which come from various sources; and his view is doubtless much above the level of the teaching of the ordinary Orphic *ἀγύρται* and *μάντρες*. With them the means of salvation was the payment for expiatory rites, and the final happiness held out to the applicant was no very refined one, *μέθη αἰώνιος*, Plato scornfully calls it<sup>2</sup>—which was possibly a Thracian conception of bliss. In some higher and more esoteric forms of doctrine, the moon and the stars were regarded as the residence of the soul after its final purification. But heaven, as we have seen,

<sup>1</sup> 'exinde per amplum  
mittimur Elysium et pauci laeta arva tenemus.'

—VIRGIL, *Aen.* vi. 744.

<sup>2</sup> *Rep.* ii. 36 D.

was not the destined home of the human soul in any widely diffused form of Greek belief.

The picturesque complexity of Greek thought and belief forms a striking contrast with the indigenous beliefs of Italy. In regard to the dead, as in its mythology generally, the Italian mind was comparatively barren and unimaginative. The Italian *χθόνιοι θεοί* or deities of earth have already been mentioned. The primitive cult of the dead was probably very similar in Greece and in Italy. Besides the Lemuria, there was a perhaps older festival of the dead in February, the Feralia, a season when it was specially incumbent upon the living to pay tribute to them (*parentare*). This festival lasted for a week, ending on February 21st. Later in the year, the spirits were believed to walk abroad on certain days, August 24th, October 5th, and November 8th, days of Harvest and of Sowing: these were days on which no work might be done, no business be transacted, no army take the field. Italian belief recognised two gods of Death, Orcus and Dis Pater, answering to Thanatos and Pluto. The word 'Orcus' probably meant a gaoler or a prison-house; it is

connected with *εἶργω*, *ἔρκος*, *εἰρκτή*, and with the Latin words *arceo*, *arx*, *arca*, *arcanus*. But, in spite of this etymology, Orcus was not so much the warder of a distant prison as the terrible god who walks abroad among men and claims them as his victims—reaps a crop, in rustic metaphor, to be stored in his ‘locker’ or granary, ‘thesaurus.’<sup>1</sup> We seem to have here the old and simple belief of a peasant population. The ruler of the invisible world was Dis Pater, the brother of Jupiter and the husband of Proserpina.

There was little brightness or beauty in these Italian beliefs; and a still darker strain, a further element of gloom and terror, was derived from Etruria. The frescoes by Orcagna at Pisa suggest to the modern observer a curious continuity in the Tuscan conception of death. The torture of the wicked, the infliction of acute agony as a punishment, is not very conspicuous in such Greek beliefs as recognise punishment at all. It was, perhaps, a more characteristically Greek idea to plunge the wicked in a

<sup>1</sup> ‘Si *metit* Orcus

*grandia cum parvis, non exorabilis auro.*’—HOR. *Epp.* II. ii. 17&

‘Thesaurus’ occurs in the epitaph of Naevius:

‘postquam est Orci traditus thesauro.’

slimy marsh.<sup>1</sup> For an active people, impeded energy and fettered limbs make the worst of punishments. The wheel of Ixion and the deprivations of Tantalus were exceptional things. The idea of torture was more prevalent in Etruria, and the Tuscan god of death was a being of peculiarly grim and savage look, armed with a hammer and a sword. He bore a Greek name, Charon, the name which we know as that of the ferryman of Styx.<sup>2</sup> It may be that Virgil was influenced by Tuscan ideas when he gave to Charon a horrible and repulsive aspect.<sup>3</sup> The Greek tendency, as Lessing pointed out, was rather to soften and beautify the idea of death.

Native Italian belief could supply but slight material to an epic poet. So far as we know, it did not divide the unseen world into different regions, or provide any definite picture of its scenery, or hold out any very clear hope of happiness for the dead. The elements with which Virgil deals are mainly Greek, derived

<sup>1</sup> εἰς πηλὸν κατορύττουσι τοὺς ἐν Αἴδου.—PLATO, *Rep.* ii. 363 D.

<sup>2</sup> Charon and his boat are not mentioned by Homer. He occurs first in a fragment of the *Minyas*.—KINKEL, *Fr. Epicorum Graecorum*, p. 215.

<sup>3</sup> *Aen.* vi. 298 f.

from Greek poetry or Greek philosophy, or from both together. How he uses these elements is a subject for more detailed study, and one which can be only summarised or illustrated here. He adopts the Orphic notion of the body as a prison, but not the strange Orphic theogony; what Anchises expounds is rather a philosophic theory, the Stoic doctrine of an all-pervading *anima mundi*. And this theory is, perhaps, in the last resort hardly consistent with the Orphic and Pythagorean idea of the future re-embodiment of a soul on earth, an idea which Virgil uses very effectively to introduce a forecast of Roman story and to glorify Augustus and Marcellus. On the one view the soul is a spark or fragment of a universal spirit into which it is reabsorbed, on the other the individual soul persists in its separate existence. The solution may be that only the finally purified soul is reabsorbed, in a kind of 'Nirvana.' But the truth seems rather to be that the Roman poet had a subtle skill in selecting what was beautiful and impressive in the legends and ideas of the past, but did not make a strenuous effort to weld what he adopted into a logical system. A poet is not bound to

do that; and Virgil, in spite of the strong bent towards philosophy which tradition ascribes to him, was a poet by temperament rather than a philosopher. The use which Virgil makes of the 'Golden Bough' is probably another instance of his selecting a thing because it is strange and picturesque in itself. Much is known about the Golden Bough and its significance in primitive belief, but there is nothing which explains why it should be an offering to Proserpina and a necessary condition of admission to the unseen world.

The scheme of the whole, perhaps, lacks that coherence which is given by intensely creative imagination or by resolute philosophic thought. But in execution, and in the presentation of particular scenes, Virgil's art rises to its highest levels in the Sixth Book. Is it a greater poem than the *véxvua* of Homer?<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to compare things so different, and the question 'Which is greater?' is not a very profitable

<sup>1</sup> It is not likely that the *véxvua* in the lost epics 'Minyas' and 'Nóσtα' could at all compare with Virgil's in power and interest. In the sphere of painting, a work somewhat akin to Virgil's was the great fresco by Polygnotus in the Lesche of the Cnidians at Delphi. It seems to have been epic in spirit, and to have combined a large number of scenes and ideas.

one in regard to works of art. The eleventh Odyssey is a great poem too, with wonderful touches of horror and pathos; of horror, when Agamemnon describes how he met his death, of pathos when Odysseus meets his mother in the world of shadows. But Virgil's work has a wider range; there is in it a deeper and more subtle sympathy; there is the majesty of Rome, and the pathos of a recent bereavement in the incident of Marcellus; there is dramatic interest in the encounter of Aeneas with Dido and with Anchises; and besides scenes of horror and gloom, there are visions of great beauty, the tranquil tide of the Eridanus flowing through fragrant groves of laurel, and the plains of Elysium bathed in a glowing light all their own. In variety of interest and splendour of imagery, the Virgilian *véκνυα* far surpasses its somewhat bare and simple Homeric prototype. It may be that some deduction should be made from the credit of Virgil. The subtlety is largely due to his living in a much later age, and the variety to the fulness of material which lay to his hand. But it is a wiser course to try to appreciate the beauty of the result than to weigh in a balance the merit of the poet who created it.



### III.


## THE SUPERNATURAL IN ANCIENT POETRY AND STORY.<sup>1</sup>

‘Praesentes namque ante domos invisere castas  
Heroum et sese mortali ostendere coetu  
Caelicolae, nondum sprete pietate, solebant.’

CATULLUS, lxiv. 384-6.

THE subject of which I propose to speak may be taken in a wider or a narrower sense. Taken in a wide sense, it would include all the theology of the ancients and their beliefs about an unseen world. I propose to take it in the more restricted sense, as including portents or prodigies, miraculous occurrences, apparitions of the dead, the visible interference of some divine or dæmonic agency with the normal course of events or the order of nature. And I propose to trace this

<sup>1</sup>A Lecture delivered to the Aberdeen University Classical Society, 15th February, 1901.



mainly as an element in literature, a thing of which poets and other writers made a more or less effective and impressive use. Even in this sense, the subject is a large and wide one. The word "supernatural," we may remark at the outset, belongs to a rather late and modern stage of civilisation: it is a word which can exist and have a meaning only when there is some conception of what is "natural," that is, when science has begun, and men think of nature as a system of fixed laws. The Greeks hardly began to think of φύσις in such a way before the fifth century, when the sophists contrasted the regularity and simplicity of nature with the arbitrary and varying arrangements of human society, φύσις with νόμος or συνθήκη. No doubt there was some apprehension of the regularity of nature long before this, and, long before, men regarded as miraculous or unusual or dæmonic many things that were presented to them by the poet or the sooth-sayer. In primitive times, to go further back, the dividing line is lost or obscured: the primitive mind accounts for most things by causes or agencies which a later generation would at once describe as supernatural. Eclipses, for example, are the work of evil spirits or witches,

practising their baleful spells upon the bright luminaries of the sky. This idea remained long in the popular mind, and it comes to the surface in quite late ages. The din of clashing metal was supposed to repel or scare away the evil influence, and Tacitus relates in the *Annals* (i. 28) that, when an eclipse of the moon occurred during the mutiny in Pannonia, the soldiers had recourse to this device, striking bronze against bronze and blowing horns and trumpets. The primitive view was not unlike what is said in an aphorism of Thales, "the world is full of gods," *πάντα πλήρη θεῶν*: spirits or dæmonic powers are at work everywhere. The whole of nature was supernatural. Gradually, as time went on, the sphere of such agencies was restricted, until in the present day it takes the utmost exertions of a psychical society to find a single authenticated case.

What we are concerned with, from our literary point of view, is the presentation of incidents which the writer feels to be miraculous and unusual, and which he expects to be felt by his hearer as startling and impressive: not everything which a modern man of science would reckon supernatural. Such an incident occurs in

the nineteenth book of the *Iliad*, when the horse Xanthus speaks to Achilles with a human voice, a voice, we are told, lent to it by the goddess Hera. When the horse has revealed to him something of the action of the gods, and something of his own future, its speech is stopped by the Erinyes. The order of nature, to use the language of a later age, has been violated, and it is vindicated and restored by the dread goddesses who also upheld the ties of natural affection among men. This is not the only indication which points to the Erinyes as the guardians of natural law. The same idea appears in a remarkable saying of Heraclitus; "the sun cannot deviate from his course: if he does, the Erinyes will find him out." Again, a man who had been in a trance—apparently dead—was not allowed to set foot in their shrine. It is a rule of nature that a man may not die twice. Anybody who was so unreasonable as to do so—the poet Hesiod was said so to have offended—incurs the displeasure of the Furies. We seem, then, to find in these goddesses a mythological anticipation of the idea of Natural Law. But it was not they alone who exercised such a supervision. Zeus, the ruler of the gods, is concerned with the

maintenance of order. And further, there are the *Moîpai* or Fates, who are sometimes thought of as superior to Zeus. When Admetus had to be rescued from death, they were deaf to entreaties and could only be deluded ; Apollo relaxed their vigilance by giving them wine. These goddesses are not very distinctly personified in Homer. They seem to be later and more allegorical than the Erinyes. Sometimes *μοῖρα* means little more than the portion dealt out to men by the gods. In Homer, there is a further safeguard against arbitrary interference with the natural course of events. The *consensus* of the other gods may be appealed to against any one god who threatens to cause a disturbance. So, in the first book of the *Odyssey*, Zeus says that Posidon will hardly persist in his prosecution of the hero, if the rest set their faces against it. There is also an interesting case in the *Iliad*. Zeus himself is strongly disposed to rescue his son Sarpedon from impending death : it is *μοῖρα*, he says, that Sarpedon must perish, but he would like to interpose. Hera points out to him that such a course will meet with general disapproval, and that it will be a most dangerous precedent : many of the immortals have sons or grandsons fighting

in Troy, and this mischievous example may be imitated !

What, we may here ask, is the general spirit or tendency of the Homeric poems in such matters? It is a rather matter-of-fact and "secular" spirit, almost a sceptical tendency. Herodotus says that Homer and Hesiod created Greek theology, or gave it an authoritative poetic form. It would be almost equally true to say that the Homeric poems represent the destruction or humanisation of a theology. Many things which had been mythology are written out afresh, as it were, in the form of a simple human story. It is not altogether improbable that Odysseus was a sun-god, who, like Hercules and Osiris passes under earth ; and Penelope, it has been thought, is the moon, who weaves and unweaves the web of her disc by night, 'tenuata retexit orbem.' But in Homer all this is forgotten or ignored. Odysseus is a mere man, and so far from *being* the sun he incurs the wrath of that deity when his comrades slay the oxen of Helios. To take one other instance—it is a decidedly curious and less familiar one—readers of the ninth book of the *Iliad* will remember that Agamemnon's proposed reparation to Achilles

included the offer of *seven* Lesbian women, in place of Briseis or rather in addition to Briseis' restoration. It seems to have been made out that behind this simple incident there lies a whole world of mythology. The Muses in Lesbos were seven in number, not nine, each associated with a town of the island and daughters of Makar, who is the Phoenician Melkarth. Castor and Pollux, again, are spoken of in the *Iliad* simply as men who are dead. Neither they nor their sister Helen are deities or luminaries of heaven, as they probably were in Laconia. Ancestor-worship hardly has any place in the Homeric world. There are no mysteries or mystic ideas of religion: the murderer, for instance, is not shunned as a polluted person under a ban: he merely pays compensation to the kindred of his victim, or flees the country to avoid their vengeance.

It is in keeping with this general tendency that Homer introduces the gods in a very casual and familiar way. He touched the stories with a light hand, sometimes in an almost frivolous way, and he rarely produces the sense of mystery and awe, the literary quality or effect which we are looking for. Contrast with Homer one of

the most impressive incidents in tragedy—the disappearance of Oedipus. The aged sufferer is summoned by the gods to his place of rest. He is accompanied by Theseus alone. One of Theseus's attendants describes what happened, what they saw from a distance. 'We could see,' he says, 'that Oedipus had vanished, and we saw the king, now alone, holding his hand as a screen before his eyes, "as though some dreadful sight had met his vision, a sight no man could bear to look upon,"'

ὥς δεινοῦ τινὸς  
φόβου φανέντος οὐδ' ἀνασχετοῦ βλέπειν.

Compared with this, the apparition of a god in Homer is a very commonplace affair. Sometimes the Homeric hero is hardly even disconcerted by it. 'Go back, daughter of Zeus, go back from the battle and the combat,' says Diomedes to Aphrodite, εἰκε, Διὸς θυγάτηρ, πολέμου καὶ δηιότητος. He is not afraid to use his weapons against her and against Ares. In the *Odyssey* the gods appear with rather more reserve, in a more fugitive and occasional way, and generally under some disguise. But there is no very material difference. Odysseus sees many wonderful things in his travels; but these

are located in very distant lands, and they are rather wonders of Nature than *supernatural* things. Perhaps the most striking example of the supernatural in the *Odyssey*—apart from the *Nékyia*—is the vision of Theoclymenus. ‘Ah, wretched men, what woe is this ye suffer? Shrouded in night are your heads and faces and knees, and kindled is the voice of wailing, and all cheeks are wet with tears, and the walls and the fair spaces between the pillars are sprinkled with blood. And the porch is full of phantoms and full is the court, the shadows of men hasting hellwards beneath the gloom, and the sun has perished out of heaven, and an evil mist has overspread the world.’<sup>1</sup> The vision is seen by the seer alone: he reads to the suitors their impending fate, but they mock at him and disbelieve it. The scene has a distinctly Celtic character, whereas Scylla and Charybdis and the Cyclops recall rather the fairy-tales of Teutonic or Scandinavian peoples. In the *Iliad* there is an incident which recalls Celtic ideas in a similar way, the ‘second-sight’ with which Hector is endowed at the moment

<sup>1</sup> *Od.* xx., 350 f. I quote from the translation by Butcher and Lang

of death, and which enables him to predict to Achilles the fate which awaits him at the Scaean gates by the hands of Apollo and Paris. There is little mention of magic or incantations in Homer. 'They bound up the wound skilfully, and stayed the black blood with a song of healing' (*Od.* xix. 457, *ἐπαιοιδῆ δ' αἶμα κελαινὸν ἔσχεθον*). This is the only passage in Homer where the word *ἐπαιοιδῆ* occurs, and the use of *ἐπῳδαί* or spells was a regular part of ordinary medical practice in Greece.

After Homer came the so-called 'Cyclic' poets, who appear to have treated heroic stories in a more systematic manner. Homer in the *Iliad* deals with the events of a very short period of time. In the cyclic poets the whole course of the siege of Troy was related. Who these poets were and what was the exact extent of their various poems is a very debatable question. There is enough evidence to show that their manner and their ideas were very different from those of Homer. To take one matter which we have already met with: the primitive atonement for murder, which appears in Homer, is no longer sufficient; the murderer must be purified by expiatory rites (*καθαρμοί*):

Achilles is so purged by Odysseus, in Lesbos, for the death of Thersites. We are near the age of the Mysteries and the Orphic priests. Along with this we may note progress in science. In the art of medicine specialisation has begun: Machaon is a surgeon; Podalirius concerns himself with more subtle disorders, and it is he who first detects the incipient madness of Ajax. For our present subject, the extant fragments and the summary of Proclus seem to show that these poets used the supernatural with less reserve and restraint than Homer. At all events, we meet with a number of very curious things. Telephus miraculously healed by Achilles; the fate of Troy bound up with the safety of the Palladium; a living and branching vine of gold given to Laomedon by Zeus; Lynceus, whose vision travels to any distance and is not obstructed by any material obstacle that may intervene, for from the top of Taygetus he descried Castor and Pollux as they sat concealed within a hollow oak-tree; Laocoon destroyed by the snakes; and the shade of Achilles appearing above his tomb to the assembled Greeks to demand the sacrifice of Polyxena—a remarkable occurrence, and one

which specially claims the attention of Psychical Societies, for it is just what they want to find, an instance of a ghost not appearing to one person or in a dream, but seen by a large number of people together. That this incident belonged to the cyclic poets is only probable, not directly proved. The sacrifice of Polyxena occurred in the *Iliu Persis* of Arctinus—that is stated by Proclus. The apparition of Achilles no doubt preceded it, for it is mentioned in Attic tragedy, which derived its Trojan story largely from the cyclic poets.

The early Lyric and Elegiac poets, who intervene between Homer and Tragedy, and some of whom were contemporary with 'cyclic' poets, present little that is of importance for our present inquiry. I will mention only one thing which appears in them—and I mention it because I have already spoken of the supernatural explanation of eclipses. It is the supernatural explanation of sunrise. How did the sun get back to the east after setting in the west? This was a problem which greatly exercised the primitive mind. One view was that he went back under the earth, whence the descents to Hades of various solar heroes and

gods. According to a fragment of Mimnermus and another fragment of Stesichorus, he sailed back on the surface of the sea, in a golden boat or shell with wings, moulded for him by Hephaestus. Obviously, Helios would not want this boat for a journey from east to west, for he travels by day through the sky; so Heracles was able to borrow it, when he went on his mission to Gades against the three-headed monster Geryon. The fragment of Stesichorus describes how he disembarks and takes his way into the forest, while Helios steps on board for his eastward voyage. Heracles was thus left in Spain without a boat. He had to come back by land, and he came back through Italy, encountering on his way the fire-breathing giant Cacus of the eighth *Aeneid*, who, it would seem, was an ancient and inoffensive fire-god of the Palatine or Aventine, transformed by poetic fancy into a dangerous monster. Stesichorus was a poet of Sicily, and his ideas about Heracles would readily find their way to Italy and Rome.

Tragedy, we have seen, depended in large measure upon the cyclic poets for its incidents; and Tragedy gives us at least one apparition

similar to that of Achilles, the appearance of the shade of Darius in the *Persae*. The venerable ghost of the late king is deliberately summoned by impressive incantations or invocations (ψυχαγωγοὶ γόοι, l. 689), and after discourse with the living, departs again to its prison-house, with an impressive hint in its last words about the powers below; they are stern and strict, 'more apt to grasp than to let go their grasp.'

οἱ κατὰ χθονὸς θεοὶ  
λαβεῖν ἀμείνους εἰσὶν ἢ μεθίεναι.

Another tragic ghost is the shade of Polydorus, who delivers the prologue to the *Hecuba*, but he is seen only by the audience, who do not count. So at the opening of the *Ajax* the audience probably see Athena; but Odysseus, though he converses with her, does not. Apart from gods and ghosts, Tragedy also makes use of oracles and of fateful or prophetic dreams. Of such dreams the most famous was that of Clytaemnestra, borrowed by Aeschylus from Stesichorus: the snake, symbolising Orestes, draws blood from her breast—in the lyric poet the dream was perhaps more complex, and contained further elements of horror. Besides



these things, tragedy dealt with some stories of transformation. Horace lays it down in the *Ars Poetica* that such things are not to take place on the stage: Cadmus is not to turn into a snake before the eyes of the spectators, or Procne into a swallow. Probably the greater poets at least observed this rule. There is, however, a curious fragment of Euripides, in which Cadmus is speaking at the moment of transformation. 'Woe is me, half of me is turning into a snake: my son, embrace what is left of your father'!

οἶμοι δρακῶν μου γίγνεται τό γ' ἡμῶν  
τέκνον, περιπλάκηθι τῷ λοιπῷ πατρί.

But this may come from the ῥῆσις of an ἄγγελος, who narrated the scene and reported the words of Cadmus. Transformations like these were collected by Alexandrian poets under the title of Ἑτεροιούμενα, and passed from them into the hands of Ovid, who uses the word 'Metamorphoses.' Such stories belonged rather to the common people: they were popular, local tales; and this leads to a general remark about Greek legend. The ancient poet hardly ever invented a story 'out

of his head,' a completely new and original story. Homer and the earlier poets had dealt mainly with legends of an aristocratic type, the stories of kings and kingly houses, like that of the Pelopidae. By the Alexandrian age this material was nearly exhausted: a poet who touched it ran the risk of being denounced as a *κυκλικός*, or conventional epicist. So the Alexandrian poets had to dig deeper, as it were: a new stratum of legend is brought up to the surface: popular stories of a romantic cast, local tales of the origin of places (dealt with in the *Ἀῖτια* of Callimachus), and fairy-tales of transformation. All these veins we see worked by Ovid. For Ovid, though not Alexandrian in style—for he is lucid and diffuse, while the Alexandrians were tortuous and allusive—is as a rule thoroughly Alexandrian in the material with which he deals.

This process of digging deeper, of going down to tales current among the people, naturally meant some recrudescence of the supernatural element. One of the things which thus came to the front and found a place in poetry was witchcraft. This is the theme of one of the Idylls of Theocritus, the

Φαρμακείτρια, imitated by Virgil in his eighth Eclogue: 'ducite ab urbe domum, mea carmina, ducite Daphnim.' Besides this, there is in Apollonius the arch-sorceress Medea, the niece of Circe—for her father Aeëtes and Circe were children of Helios—who enables Jason to defy the fire-breathing bulls, to baffle the crop of armed warriors, and to cast the spell of slumber upon the dragon that guards the golden fleece. The power to whom Medea appeals is Hecate, the dread goddess of ghosts and magic, 'Ενοδία, the queen of the dark cross-roads at midnight when spectres walk abroad. It was not only in her native Colchis that Medea exercised her spells. The death of Pelias in Thessaly is a well-known tale, and the destruction of her rival at Corinth, the daughter of the Corinthian king. I will mention, instead of these, a less-known incident, which is extremely curious. On their homeward voyage the Argonauts approached the island of Crete. Now, there dwelt there a giant named Talos who was the last survivor of the Race of Bronze. The Brazen race, we are told, was not so depraved as the present race of iron; but Talos at once adopted a hostile attitude, and

began to hurl large fragments of rock at the ship in a dangerous manner. Medea made an end of him by a sort of telepathy or wireless telegraphy, shooting at him deadly glances, which confused his mind. He stumbled on the cliffs and was mortally injured in the only vulnerable part of him, which was the ankle.

The special home of witchcraft was Thessaly. Lucan, describing in his *Pharsalia* a campaign fought there, makes a gruesome and rather exaggerated use of Thessalian witchcraft. At the request of Sextus Pompeius, a Thessalian sorceress brings a dead man to life and forces him to foretell the future. The story contains some points of interest for the theory of witchcraft. It is the 'black art'—a thing condemned by the gods above. It is an unlawful appeal to the powers of the nether world. Sextus is convinced that the gods of heaven are not sufficiently well-informed ('scire parum superos,' *Phars.* vi. 434). It is in Thessaly that the necessary means are to be found: the most potent herbs grow there, and even Medea found new ones when she came thither from Colchis:

ibi plurima surgunt  
vim factura deis,

'vim factura deis,' things that can put constraint upon the gods—this is the essence of magic, as contrasted with legitimate prayer and supplication; the god is compelled to act, he has no choice. Lucan then enumerates many of the things which magic spells can do. They can inspire passion, they can arrest the revolution of the stars and prolong the night, they can cause rain and thunder and storms without the consent or even the knowledge of Jupiter; they can freeze the torrent in mid-air and turn back the course of rivers; they can tame wild animals and disarm the rage of snakes. The poet wonders how the gods come to submit to such constraint, and proceeds to speak of eclipses caused by magic art. He then describes the peculiar and dreadful powers of the witch Erichtho, and unfolds with every circumstance of horror the process by which she recalls one of the dead to life and makes him speak once more.

Witchcraft is dealt with by Horace in two of the *Epodes* and in one of the *Satires*, but it is rather the nefarious practices of witches that he depicts than any successful achievement in eliciting supernatural manifestations. Horace

seems to be a sceptic about such things. At the end of the Satire in which he describes the journey to Brundisium, he refuses to believe in a miracle that is shown to him. 'I have learnt that the gods spend their days in tranquillity, and that the wonders of Nature are not sent by angry gods from their high home in heaven.' 'Deos didici securum agere ævum'—the words he uses are the words of Lucretius, and he seems to be acknowledging discipleship. It was Lucretius who taught him and others this salutary lesson. This, in fact, was the great service rendered by Lucretius, that he helped men to think of the world as the realm of unvarying law, a system to be trusted, not the playground of malignant and unpredictable agencies. We must think of him as helping mankind to awake from an evil dream.

In Rome's greatest poet, Virgil, there is not very much that is supernatural in our restricted sense of the word. There is the traditional epic machinery of gods and goddesses, and there is the splendid and impressive descent of Aeneas to Hades in the sixth book. Apart from this, there are some portents, such as the flame which plays about the hair of Lavinia

(*Aen.* vii.). The most startling instance of the supernatural is when the ships of Aeneas slip their cables and are transformed into nymphs of the sea (*Aen.* ix.).

There are these prodigies, and there are apparitions of the dead. The appearance of a ghost is perhaps the commonest form of the supernatural, and a complete account of the subject would have to include a separate discussion of the ancient ghost.

The appearance of Achilles to the assembled Greeks we have seen to be an exceptional thing. Much more commonly the spirit appears to a single person in a dream. To the ancient mind, a dream is not a purely 'subjective' thing, a mere hallucination. Modern Science gives some such account of a dream as the following. The brain may be regarded as a machine which translates: it translates the vibration of an optic nerve into the perception of an object in space. And if the nerve is in some way disturbed or vibrates *without* an external cause, the brain performs its function all the same and translates the disturbance into a vision. This is Schopenhauer's general account of a dream, anticipated to some extent

by Aristotle. No such idea was familiar to the ancients generally. The spirit is seen in a dream : but the spirit is really there, it has come from its distant home to visit the sleeper. So Patroclus appears to Achilles in Homer, 'all night long the ghost of unhappy Patroclus stood by me, wailing and crying upon me,' *ψυχὴ ἐφειστήκει γούωσά τε μυρομένη τε*. So Hector appears to Aeneas, 'ante oculos maestissimus Hector visus adesse mihi' (*Aen.* ii.). Or, if the spirit itself does not come, a wraith or phantom, an *εἶδωλον*, is sent by the gods, such as the spectre of Anchises which floats down from heaven to visit Aeneas (*Aen.* v. 722) 'facies cælo delapsa parentis Anchisæ'—'cælo delapsa'—the dead in ancient belief do not go to heaven above, but to Hades under earth, or to the islands of the Blest in the Western Ocean. This idea of a wraith or image detached from the real person or soul appears in a poem of Tennyson, who had a subtle and penetrating knowledge of ancient ideas. The bereaved mother, Demeter, relates how an image of her daughter came to her and spoke :

'Last, as the likeness of a dying man,  
Without his knowledge, from him flits to warn



A far-off friendship that he comes no more,  
So he, the god of dreams, who heard my cry,  
Drew from thyself the likeness of thyself  
Without thy knowledge, and thy shadow past  
Before me, crying, 'The Bright One in the highest  
Is brother to the Dark One in the lowest,  
And Bright and Dark have sworn that I . . .  
Should be for ever and for evermore  
The Bride of Darkness.'

It may be a phantom, but it is still something external to the sleeper, not a mere illusion or creation of the troubled mind.

Darius in the *Persae* explains that it is hard to return to earth, consent is not easily obtained. It is chiefly to claim redress for some grievous wrong that the spirit returns: so Dido threatens to haunt Aeneas, 'omnibus umbra locis adero.' Frequently the wrong is the refusal of due rites of burial. 'The souls keep me aloof,' says Patroclus to Achilles, 'and will not let me cross the river to join their company.' The funeral fire must be lit. 'When ye have paid me the tribute of fire, I shall return no more.'

οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' αἶψα  
νίσσομαι ἐξ 'Αΐδαο, ἐπὶν με πυρὸς λελάχητε.

It is this grievous wrong that Antigone in Sophocles resents for her brother. Eteocles is

ἔντιμος νεκροῖς, honoured among the dead, but Polynices is an unburied outcast. The aggrieved spirit, when it reappears on earth, usually wears the aspect that it bore in life, the outward semblance of the man as he was. 'It was like him in everything,' says Homer of the shade of Patroclus, 'in stature and in the beauty of its eyes and in its voice, and the garments that it wore were like his.' Sometimes, however, the apparition resembles the man as he was at the moment of death. Thus Hector comes to Aeneas as he looked when he had been dragged behind the car, 'raptatus bigis, ut quondam, aterque cruento pulvere.' There are many other indications of a similar belief. In the eleventh *Odyssey* the hero sees, among the dead, warriors with blood-stained armour, βεβρωτῶμένα τεύχε' ἔχοντας. So, too, Oedipus confidently expects that he will be blind in Hades: he justifies his act by saying that he could not look upon the face of his father or his mother in the unseen world. The same idea explains the practice known as μασχαλισμός: a murderer cuts off the hands, or the hands and feet, of his victim to disable the angry spirit from its pursuit of vengeance.

The ancient ghost, then, does *not* appear in the form of a skeleton, or wrapped in a winding sheet: there is no rattling of bones or clanking chains. Are these the morbid fancies of races that do not practise cremation? One is tempted to think so. The fire consumes the bodily frame, only a  $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$  καὶ εἶδωλον survives, the soul flits away like a dream (*Od.* xi. 222).

Much more might be said on this subject, and on other aspects of the supernatural. But in place of further discussion or exposition, I prefer to quote two continuous passages. One is in the *Mostellaria* of Plautus, the other in Lucian. 'Mostellaria' is a title answering to 'The Haunted House.' There is no ghost—the whole thing is a trick devised by a clever slave, Tranio, whose object is to deter the owner of the house from entering it.

*Theopropides*.—You say that I am not to knock at the door or touch the house? Why not?

*Tranio*.—For the last seven months not a man has set foot within the door since we left.

*Th*.—Explain. Why so?

*Tr*.—Just look round to see that there's nobody who can overhear us.

*Th*.—Oh, it's quite safe.

*Tr.*—Look again.

*Th.*—There's nobody. Go on.

*Tr.*—It is a crime of the deepest dye.

*Th.*—What? I don't follow you.

*Tr.*—A crime, I say, done long ago, years and years past.

*Th.*—Long ago?

*Tr.*—Yes, but we have only now found it out, you see.

*Th.*—What's this crime you talk of? Who committed it? Tell me.

*Tr.*—The host overpowered and slew his guest, being, as I take it, the man who sold the house to you.

*Th.*—Slew him, did he?

*Tr.*—Yes, and took his gold from him| and buried him on the spot, within the house.

*Th.*—What reason have you for suspecting such a thing?

*Tr.*—Listen, I'll tell you. Your son had been dining out one evening, and when he came home we all went to bed. We fell asleep. As it chanced, I had forgotten to put out one of the lamps. All of a sudden he shouted out at the top of his voice.

*Th.*—Who shouted? My son?

*Tr.*—Hush, hush : listen a moment. He said that the dead man had come to him in his sleep.

*Th.*—In his sleep, you say ?

*Tr.*—Yes ; just listen a moment. He said that the dead man spoke to him thus——

*Th.*—In his sleep ?

*Tr.*—You don't suppose he would speak to him when he was awake—a man who had been killed sixty years ago ? You are sometimes a little slow in picking up things, Theopropides.

*Th.*—I won't interrupt again.

*Tr.*—Well, look you, this is what the dead man said : ' I am Diapontius, a guest from over sea. I dwell here ; this is the home assigned to me. For Orcus refused to admit me to Acheron, seeing that I have died before my time. I am the victim of a breach of trust ; my host slew me, and secretly, without burial, thrust me underground in this house, miscreant that he was, to get my gold. You must now seek another home. This is the house of guilt, and to dwell in it is an offence.' It would take me a year to tell you the strange things that go on here, and I couldn't do it then.

*Th.*—Hush, hush !

*Tr.*—What is it, in the name of Heaven ?

*Th.*—The door creaked.

*Tr. (loudly, to the spirits).*—It was he who knocked, not I!

*Th.*—I haven't a drop of blood in my body. The dead are summoning me to go below.

*Tr. (aside).*—I'm lost; these people inside will spoil the game. I am much afraid that he will find me out.

*Th.*—What are you muttering to yourself?

*Tr.*—Go away from the door! Fly! Fly, I entreat you!

*Th.*—Where am I to fly? Fly yourself!

*Tr.*—Oh, I have no fear: I am on good terms with the spirits.

*A Voice from within.*—Hullo, Tranio!

*Tr.*—You won't address yourself to me, if you are wise. I haven't done anything; it wasn't I who hit the door.

The passage from Lucian is one of many ghost stories related in the dialogue *Philopseudes*. Lucian's attitude is, of course, a satirical and sceptical one. The stories are clever parodies of what was current in his day. In the course of the conversation, a Pythagorean philosopher, named Arignotus, comes in, and the sceptic,

who is in a minority of one, hopes that he has at last found an ally. But he is disappointed. Arignotus thinks that there is something to be said for the view that it is only the ghosts of those who have met with a violent death that return to walk the earth. But beyond that limitation he has no doubts. 'If you are ever in Corinth,' he says, 'inquire for the house of Eubatides, and say when you get there that you want to see the house from which Arignotus the Pythagorean expelled a ghost.'

We may note in passing that the word for 'ghost' or 'spirit' is generally *ὁ δαίμων*. Often applied to the gods, and applied to them in a quite impressive and reverential way, the word *δαίμων* seems to have suffered some degradation with the lapse of time. It came to suggest intervention in the affairs of men—to mean not so much a god enthroned in Olympus as a god or spirit of any grade making his presence felt on earth. The adjective *δαιμόνιος* is quite unlike *θεῖος* in its usage, and it really answers very closely in many cases to our word 'supernatural.'

'What was that, Arignotus?'—the conversation proceeds—the host Eucrates asks.

'The house,' he replied, 'had for long been

rendered uninhabitable by apparitions, and when any one did try to live there, he very soon fled in terror, driven out by some appalling visitant from the other world. So the house was falling into ruin, its roof was breaking up, and there was no one who would pluck up courage to enter it. On hearing of this I took my books—I have many Egyptian works on such subjects—and proceeded to the house after nightfall, though my host tried to dissuade me and all but laid hands on me, when he learned where I was going—to face certain peril, as he supposed. However, I took a lamp and went in alone. Putting down the light in the largest room of the house, I seated myself on the floor, and was quietly perusing one of my volumes, when the spirit presented himself, taking me for an ordinary person (*ἐπὶ τινα τῶν πολλῶν ἤκειν νομίζων*) and expecting to scare me out of my wits as he had done the others. He was an unkempt figure, blacker than the pit, with long hair. There he was, doing his utmost to get me into his clutches by assaults on every side, and turning into a dog at one moment, and into a bull or a lion the next.'

This ghost, we may observe, is an evil-minded



ghost, given to mischief; he does not come in the plain likeness of the living, as Patroclus does, to ask burial for his bones, but has apparently been demoralised by the fun of frightening people.

Arignotus proceeds: 'Availing myself of the most blood-curdling formula I could find, and speaking in the Egyptian tongue, I exorcised him with such effect as to drive him into the corner of a dark room, and noting the spot where he went underground I spent the rest of the night in slumber. Next morning, when everybody had given me up for lost and expected to find only my dead body, I astonished them all by my reappearance, and approaching Eubatides, I congratulated him on the fact that he would now be able to inhabit the house in peace. So I took him and many others, who were attracted by curiosity, and conducting them to the spot where I had seen the ghost vanish, I told them to take spades and picks, and dig. On their doing this, there was found, at a depth of six feet, a body long decayed, of which the bones only remained in place. So they dug him up and buried him, and from that day the house ceased to be disturbed by apparitions.'



#### IV.

#### THE AGE OF GOLD.

'Aurea, quae perhibent, illo sub rege fuere  
Saecula : sic placida populos in pace regebat.'

—VIRG. *Aen.* viii. 324-5.

THE feeling that Society is imperfect and capable of improvement has at various times prompted men to draw a picture of a better and happier community, an ideal commonwealth, or a race living a more tranquil life under more favourable conditions than ours. Sometimes the Utopia or ideal country is placed in a remote region of the earth, and introduced by the more or less transparent fiction of travel and discovery. Sometimes it is distant in time. It is projected into the future, or found in the supposed records of a remote past. In recent times the tendency has been to look forward to the distant future. It is easy to find

examples: visions or forecasts of this kind are set forth in such books as Lord Lytton's *Coming Race*, *The Revolt of Man* by the late Sir Walter Besant, and *Looking Back*, by an American author, a picture of an age to which the present one is ancient history. With the Greeks, the opposite tendency is more conspicuous. Plato's Atlantis is an island that once existed in the sea beyond the Pillars of Hercules, but is now submerged. The 'Golden Age' of ancient poets is a primeval age of innocence and bliss. The modern man looks in one direction, the Greek in another. Why this contrast should exist, if it does exist, it would be difficult to say. Some probable causes of it may be suggested. Rapid progress in mechanical science, the conquest of steam and electricity, has prompted the thought of further advance. With deeper moral feelings or ideas there has come a greater dissatisfaction with the actual world, a stronger desire for progress, and with that, it may be, a greater reluctance to contemplate the idea that things are worse than they once were. At the same time, Ethics and Anthropology have brought us to a clearer conception of primitive man and of early stages of civilisation. The idea

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of a past Golden Age rests to some extent on a fallacy. Go backwards, undo what has been done: take away the vices of civilisation, and the virtues will be left. We know now that the virtues would not be left, and were not there. The vices and virtues grow up together, and by going back we arrive, not at what is highly moral, but at what is crude, half-conscious, and non-moral. With the Greeks and Romans, in a less critical and less scientific age, there was a strong tendency to idealise the past, to believe in great and good ancestors or founders, and to attribute to them all that was wise and salutary in the old institutions they knew. Further, the Greek had, I think, in this respect a 'good conceit of himself.' He thought he had done rather well: his civilisation stood out in marked contrast to that of his 'barbarian' neighbours. He was little troubled with the idea of a universal morality to be achieved: 'the parliament of man, the federation of the world,' was a thing of which he thought little, and which he would hardly think worth striving for. And, instead of contemplating indefinite progress or improvement, he often thought rather that whatever was worth finding out

must have been found out already ἐν τῷ πολλῷ χρόνῳ, ἐν τοῖς πολλοῖς ἔτεσιν: if there were good things which the present age knew not, some past age had probably known them, but these approaches to perfection had been terminated by some φθορά or cataclysm, which forced the human race to learn its lessons over again. We shall find, however, that the contrast which we have drawn between the ancients and the moderns holds only with large reservations. Some of the ancients do contemplate a future Golden Age, and some are quite aware of the fallacy involved in supposing that a primitive people is primitively innocent. Both these reservations or exceptions are found in the extant fragments of old Attic comedy.

Hesiod, perhaps even more than Homer, was 'the Bible of the Greeks,' a storehouse of traditions and precepts to be interpreted and expanded, or misinterpreted, with more or less ingenuity and intelligence. One of the ideas furnished by this storehouse was that of a past Golden Age, a remote period from which a gradual transition had been made to the present age of iron.<sup>1</sup> The race was of gold,

<sup>1</sup> *Works and Days*, 109 f.

χρῦσεον γένος, perhaps thought of as literally made of the precious metal.<sup>1</sup> Next came a race of Silver, then one of Bronze. But here the series had to be interrupted. Before the present age came the age of the Heroes, who were ancestors of noble houses in Greece. They could not be ignored. So the process of degeneration is interrupted. Then follows the Iron age, full of crime, misery, and oppression ; for Hesiod takes a gloomy view of his own time and in some degree represents the feelings of the oppressed, of the peasantry rather than of the chiefs for whom Homer sang. The heroes who fought at Thebes and Troy go after death to the Islands of the Blest. The Golden Race become guardian spirits, δαίμονες, who walk the earth unseen, and watch over the destinies of men. The Silver Race survives too after death,

<sup>1</sup> It is doubtful how far, and in what sense, the metals are symbolic. No doubt they were largely so. Gold is the metal of greatest value and beauty. The race of silver is feebler and less dutiful in its conduct. Bronze and iron are metals wrought with more labour, and metals from which weapons of war are made. These two later ages are periods of warfare, toil, and crime.

Hesiod says that the Brazen Race was made from ash-trees, ἐκ μελιᾶν. Apollonius seems to think of a man of the Brazen Race as actually made of the metal (*Argon.* iv., 1643, 1646): his blood flowing from a wound resembles lead (1680).

but under earth as *μάκαρες θνητοί*, without this protecting power.

In this passage of Hesiod there are two lines which are of special interest. In one of them the poet expresses a wish that he had either died earlier—before the age of Iron—or had been born later: *ἢ πρόσθε θανεῖν ἢ ἔπειτα γενέσθαι*. It is possible to interpret this as implying a belief that the age of Gold would return, and we may perhaps see in Hesiod's phrase the first germ or suggestion from which the idea of a future Golden Age was to grow.<sup>1</sup> The other line is perhaps an interpolation; it comes in a little strangely and awkwardly. 'They'—the Race of Gold—'lived in the time of Kronos, when he was King of Heaven.' The undisputed text says, when a new race is created, that 'the gods made it,' *ἀθάνατοι*

<sup>1</sup> It has been thought that Hesiod contemplates three series or cycles of degenerating ages: one which begins with the age of Gold and ends with the age of Bronze; a second, beginning with the Heroes and ending with the age of Iron; and a third, which Virgil foresees, 'ultima Cumaei venit iam carminis aetas,' Cumaeon meaning Hesiodic, since Hesiod's traditional birth-place was Cyme in Asia Minor.

But it is against this that Hesiod expressly calls his own age 'the Fifth'; and 'Cumaei' in Virgil is more naturally taken to refer to Sibylline prophecy.

ποίησαν; and when the Silver Race became rebellious, 'Zeus overwhelmed it in his wrath' In later versions of the story the Golden Age is generally presided over by Kronos or Saturn, whose rule was of a very different kind from that of Zeus. It was lenient, indulgent, peaceful: men lived in affluence on the spontaneous fruits of the earth; their temper was not tried, their ingenuity or courage evoked, by dangers and difficulties.

When we next meet with the idea of a Golden Age—extant Greek literature does not enable us to trace its development continuously—it has come into the hands of philosophers, and is beginning to acquire new and deeper meanings. In the fifth century it appears in Empedocles and in some of the sophists, and a little later similar ideas are found in Plato. Empedocles, who held that all things were composed of the four commonly recognised elements, earth, water, fire and air, accounted for the composition of them and their dissolution by supposing two contrary agencies, *Νεῖκος* and *Φιλία*, Strife and Concord, which sundered and united respectively. He seems to have held further that in the history of the world

now one principle prevailed and now the other. An extant fragment of his poem describes a past age which had been presided over by Φιλία: 'No war-god had they, or Κυδοιμός' (Havoc or Rout personified), 'no Zeus for King or Kronos or Posidon, but only Kypris for their Queen.' Picturesque and rather fanciful in Empedocles, the idea of a past age of bliss becomes in the hands of contemporary or slightly later sophists a vehicle for what we should call theories of social evolution. There had been a simple and natural period, untainted by the artificialities of civilisation: the arrangements of civilisation were arbitrary, they had no root in Nature or in natural law, they were due to convention or mutual agreement, νόμος or συνθήκη. It was in this spirit that Hippias of Elis attempted to revert to primitive conditions, to revolt against division of labour and organised manufacture, by making with his own hands everything that he required—his shoes, his cloak, and his house. Such ideas must have been much talked of in the fifth century, for they became a theme of comedy. In the fragments of the elder contemporaries of Aristophanes, Crates and Pherecrates, we find traces

of the treatment of a savage or primitive mode of life. In the *Ἄγριοι*, or 'Savages' of Pherecrates, the chorus consisted of *μισάνθρωποι*, haters of mankind, who abandoned civilisation and went to live in the woods.<sup>1</sup> The experiment was a failure. Before long they found themselves pining for the company of Eurybates and Phrynondas, who presumably were two of the most disreputable characters at Athens, rascals who represented civilisation at its worst. From the same play we have a statement about a past age of simplicity: there were no household slaves, male or female; the women did all the work with their own hands. A passage from Teleclides describes at length a past age of such plenty and spontaneous abundance that no domestic labour was required. In the *Θηρία*, or 'Wild Beasts' of Crates, an ingenious person<sup>2</sup> has formed a project for restoring this state of things. It is to be done by mechanism. Things are to become automata: 'I will give everything legs and make it walk,' *ὅδοιποροῦντα γὰρ*

<sup>1</sup> Plato, *Protagoras*, 327D.

<sup>2</sup> Or was it one of the Beasts? Fragment 17 (ed. Kock) suggests the possibility that in this play the Beasts were entrusted for a time with the general management of affairs—mankind having made no great success of it!



τὰ πάντ' ἐγὼ ποιήσω. Then he gives illustrations of the scheme. 'Where is the cup? Cup, go and rinse yourself out.' 'Fish, come to table.' 'Excuse me, but I am done only on one side.' 'Then turn yourself over, and give yourself a sprinkling of salt.' There is to be no more shouting for slaves to carry pitchers of hot water when you want a bath. Water is to be carried in pipes on columns, so that it can be turned on in a moment—a curious anticipation of the Roman aqueduct and the modern bath. The whole idea is not uninteresting or unimportant; it anticipates the modern hope of relegating to machinery the more degrading or monotonous tasks. We have here, moreover, a feature of the Golden Age, the absence of slaves and slave-labour, a state of things which was restored for a time at the festivals of Saturn. Another play, which bore the title 'Golden Race,' Χρυσοῦν Γένος, seems to have been political rather than social in tendency. It dealt with the ambitious projects of Cleon. The author was Eupolis.

In Plato, a passage of the *Politicus* expounds the notion of cycles or alternate periods, better and worse, orderly and disordered. For a time

the world is guided in its course by the deity who created it ; then he leaves it to itself, stands aloof and looks on from a distant point of vantage : so the world, being largely material and imperfectly permeated by reason, spins backward, as it were, reversing its motion : all things grow older instead of growing stronger and younger. Age and decay beset them. This is the period in which we now live. The sudden change or reversal is imperfectly recorded by legend in the story of Atreus, according to which the sun changed his course in horror at human crime. In the better period, under divine guidance, living creatures were born old or mature, and gradually became more vigorous and youthful. Persons born a few years before the reversal came, with grey hairs, never arrived at maturity or youth, but turned back on their path, as it were, grew old again and died. Indefinite progress onward in the same direction is not an idea familiar to the ancients.

Roman poets borrowed largely from Alexandria, and in an extant Alexandrian poet, Aratus, there is a passage of some length which relates the degeneration of mankind—Aratus was a follower of Hesiod—and the departure of Diké



or Astraea from the earth. In the Golden Age she moved freely among men and was often seen. In the age of silver, her presence became rarer, and her mien was different. She dwelt in the high mountains, and occasionally came down to their spurs or lower slopes, 'in the afternoon,' to preach a sermon to an evil and perverse generation. Her discourse contains a phrase which is strikingly like a well-known passage in Horace, and perhaps suggested it: 'What a race the golden sires have left behind them, worse than were they, and your offspring will be baser still.'<sup>1</sup> With the advent of the Brazen Race she fled to Heaven and became the constellation Virgo.

Aratus exerted some influence at Rome, poor poet though he was. Cicero translated him into Latin Hexameters, as did Germanicus later. The Golden Age, suggested in this and in other ways to the Romans, had considerable attractions for them. They, or at all events some of their chief writers, had a strong liking for the country, and an interest in simple and primitive life. In

<sup>1</sup> ὅτε χρύσειοι πατέρες γένει' ἐλίποντο  
χειροτέρην' ὑμῖς δὲ κακώτερα τέλεισθε.

—AR. *Phaenomena*, ll. 123-4.

Roman poetry the characteristics of the golden age of Saturn are described at some length: Peace and Plenty, the absence of crime and misery, no dealings with the sea or travelling to strange lands; no commerce, no avarice or hoarded wealth; a vegetarian diet, abstention from the flesh of animals,—here we come upon another vein of thought which affected the belief in an age of gold, the Pythagorean *misodict* against eating flesh. Under Saturn there was no bloodshed, no slaughtering of animals, no wounding of men. All this was reserved for the sterner rule of Zeus—

‘At Love sub domino caedes et volnera semper:  
nunc mare, nunc leti mille repente viae.’

Life under Jupiter was more hazardous, more enterprising, more laborious. According to Aratus, it was the Brazen Age that first knew the shedding of blood. ‘They were the first to forge the deadly knife of the highwayman, the first to taste of the ox that ploughed for them.’<sup>1</sup> Aratus does not say anything about

<sup>1</sup> οἱ πρῶτοι κακοεργὸν ἐχαλκεύσαντο μάχαιραν  
εἰνοδίην, πρῶτοι δὲ βοῶν ἐπάσαντ’ ἀροτήρων.—*Phaen.* 131-2.

In the *Θηρία* of Crates, already referred to, the animals seem to have protested successfully against being eaten: the diet

Kronos or Saturn. The Romans made much of him—not that he was probably a popular or widely worshipped deity, in any time of which we have definite records. He was an agricultural deity: his name, Saturnus or Sæturnus, is perhaps to be connected with sowing (*sero, satum*); and he was associated with the Capitoline Hill, which, according to Virgil, bore the name Saturnia (*Aen.* viii., 'Ianiculum hunc aut, illi fuerat Saturnia nomen'). According to Virgil also, Saturn ruled as King in Latium when he had been expelled from Heaven by Jupiter; he civilised the people, and taught them to till the soil. It is difficult to determine how much is genuinely Italian in the life of Saturn. 'Saturn belongs, like Janus,' says Mr. Warde Fowler, 'to an age into whose religious ideas we cannot penetrate, and survived into Roman worship only through Greek asciticism and in the feast of the Saturnalia.' The restored Golden Age is to be vegetarian, in accordance with the Orphic or Pythagorean precept. 'silvestres homines . . . *bus et victu foedo deterruit Orpheus*,' Hor. *A. P.* 391. An animal might be a kinsman re-incarnate: see Empedocles 428 (Stein) and the following fragments. I fail to see why Rohde (*loc. cit.* p. 418) should accuse Horace of misunderstanding Aristophanes (*Frogs* 1032, *φῶρον τ' ἀνέχεσθαι*). Pythagorean ideas were known at Rome.

In the *Κρόνια* or Saturnalia a feature of the supposed primitive age was revived: the relationship of master and slave was effaced or inverted. They sat at the same table: the custom was, according to a fragment of the poet Accius, 'ut cum dominis famuli epulentur ibidem.' If the master did not actually feast with his slaves, he kept out of the way, and gave them as little trouble as possible: thus Cicero says he will not go to one of his country seats at the time of the Saturnalia, 'that I may not be a burden to the household.'<sup>1</sup> A similar suspension or inversion of ordinary relations is recorded as having been customary in Arcadia, when sacrifice was offered to the Heroes.<sup>2</sup> Thus the idea of a Golden Age, mythical and fanciful in many of its forms, was not without its practical value. It was a *μῦθος* with a *λόγος* or rational principle underlying it. It was a way of recognising the artificiality

<sup>1</sup> 'Ne molestus familiae veniam.'

<sup>2</sup> *Athen.* iv. 149 D (quoting Theopompus). Accius expressly speaks of the custom as belonging to the Greek *Κρόνια* and derived thence by the Romans. But there is a lack of evidence for this. There are indications of an agricultural origin. When all harvesting is over, and the autumn sowing done, master and labourer enjoy a period of rest and festivity together.

and imperfection of existing institutions; it suggested the idea of improving them, and it helped to afford a temporary respite to the oppressed.

At this point in the inquiry we may pause to observe a little more closely the contrast between Kronos, the ruler of the Golden Age, and Zeus, the present King of the Gods. This is the theological interest of the myth. What was the character or method of government attributed to Zeus? It was not lenient or beneficent on principle, or at all events not directly so. The Greeks, and the Romans like them, were an active-minded and energetic race; and sometimes we seem to find the feeling that the Golden Age would have been exceedingly dull. It was a time of rest and indolence. Zeus was a harder task-master; under him men were disciplined by trials and troubles: 'The Father willed it that the path of husbandry should be no easy one, it was he who first broke up the fields by craft, whetting to sharpness by sufferings the minds of men.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'pater ipse colendi  
haud facilem esse viam voluit primusque per artem  
movit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda,  
nec torpere gravi passus sua regna veterno.'—*Georg.* i. 121 f.

The prevailing idea of the *Georgics* is that man is engaged in an uphill contest with Nature. All things tend to relapse into waste and wilderness, but for the persistent toil of the husbandman. The same idea is expressed by Lucretius. Under Saturn the earth had borne all its fruits unasked and untilled. But Zeus would not allow his subjects to sink into the torpor of sloth.

This conception of Zeus is often overlooked by modern readers. It seems to have been, on the whole, the conception of the greatest theological poet of Greece, Aeschylus. Aeschylus is clearly trying to expound and enforce a higher conception of Zeus than the current one; and the modern reader is apt to think that he regards Zeus as consistently beneficent—to assume, for instance, that in the sequel of the Promethean trilogy some compact was arranged by which Zeus consented to govern leniently. There is no evidence for this in what is known of the trilogy, and elsewhere, in a chorus of the *Agamemnon*, Zeus is extolled as the permanent ruler—in contrast with Uranos and Kronos, who have passed away—who ‘leads men on the path of thought, who

has laid it down for ever that they must learn by suffering.'<sup>1</sup> Mercy and leniency, it has been said, are the qualities hoped for in an Oriental despot: what the free Greek praises in the King of the Gods is Justice and Discipline. Prometheus' *φιλανθρωπία* was no new and higher principle which was to triumph. It was a predilection of his own for a feeble race whom Zeus intended to destroy and supplant by another. Prometheus thwarted the design and was punished, but his punishment came to an end, for he possessed a secret which was important for Zeus. That seems to be the strict content of the drama, if it is read without prejudice and modern preconceptions.

To return to the Golden Age, we must allow that the idea of its recurrence in the future is not at all conspicuous. There is no confident expectation of it, and little thought of it as a thing to be worked for and brought about by deliberate effort. But there is one remarkable poem in which its coming is predicted, the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil; and in

<sup>1</sup> τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὀδῶ-  
σαντα, τὸν πάθῃ μάθοι  
θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.—*Agam.* 176 f.

the *Aeneid*, written much later, Augustus is spoken of as destined to restore a Golden Age to Latium, the country once ruled by Saturn—

‘aurea condet  
saecula qui rursus Latio regnata per arva  
Saturno quondam.’<sup>1</sup>

The Fourth Eclogue is not, however, explained by a mere reference to this passage of the *Aeneid*. It was written long before the battle of Actium, when Octavian was a triumvir. The only person named in it by the poet is Pollio, and the coming of the Golden Age is associated with the birth and growth of a child who cannot<sup>2</sup> be the offspring of Octavian, for his only child was a daughter, Julia. Who was the child whom Virgil had in view? And in thinking of a child at all, was he influenced in any way by Jewish ideas of a coming Messiah, ideas which may quite possibly have become known at Rome by this time? No very certain answer can be given to these questions. Probably the second should be answered in the negative. As to the first, the identification of the child, there is one definite piece of traditional evidence which at

<sup>1</sup> *Aen.* vi. 792-4.

<sup>2</sup> But see note at the end of this lecture.

least requires careful consideration. Pollio's son, Asinius Gallus, was born about the time of the Eclogue, and Asconius, an able and learned critic of the age of Nero, left it on record that Asinius Gallus had told him that he, Gallus, was the child contemplated by Virgil. Gallus, whose father was a friend of the poet, must have had ample opportunity of learning what the intention of the poem was. If he made this claim without warrant, we seem almost driven to the conclusion that Virgil's picture was fanciful—if it was not, there would be some definite claimant in the field, and Gallus could hardly make his claim at all. Is it intrinsically probable, and consistent with the language of the poem, that Gallus was the child? It is said of the child that he is to rule with his father's virtues a pacified world, or to rule a world pacified by his father's virtues—

*'pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem.'*

The phrase is ambiguous. If *'patriis virtutibus'* be read with *'pacatum,'* there is a clear allusion to the part played by Pollio in arranging the Treaty of Brundisium. But we cannot with certainty read the words in this way; and what

of 'reget'? He is to rule the new and better world: could this be said of any child unrelated to Octavian? Perhaps this is not an insuperable difficulty: we do not know much about the circumstances of the time. Octavian may have had special reasons for conciliating Pollio and acquiescing in a compliment paid to him. For all we know, he may himself have said, 'This child will see a better age dawn upon Italy,' thus suggesting the idea to the poet. But there is one passage in the Eclogue which it is somewhat difficult to reconcile with the theory that Gallus is the child. It is where Virgil addresses Pollio—

'teque adeo decus hoc aevi te consule inibit,  
Pollio, et incipient magni procedere menses.'

'In your consulship this glorious age will begin.' It is not impossible, but it seems strange that the poet should use these words if Pollio was the *father* of the child. Why 'in your consulship,' if so much more can be said? On the whole, we cannot take it as certain that Asinius Gallus was the child intended.

Some of Virgil's imagery and some of his ideas we have already met with. 'Iam redit et

Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna.' The maiden is Justice, or Astraea (who became the constellation Virgo)—her departure had been described by Aratus and others. The next line seems to be Hesiodic: 'iam nova progenies caelo demittitur alto,' a new race is sent down from high Heaven, Hesiod's 'ἀθάνατοι ποίησαν.' Further on, when wars are done and the Golden Dawn is broadening into Golden Day, we have a feature which appeared in Aratus: the trader will desert the sea, and no vessel will carry merchandise from land to land—

'cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus  
mutabit merces.'

In general, I think we must say of Virgil's picture that its features have precedent in Greek and Roman legend. There is nothing clearly extraneous in the imagery. Nor is it easy to recognise anything extraneous in the metrical form of the poem. It has been argued that the sense frequently ends with the end of the line, and that the poem thus falls into short sections or strophes, analogous to the structure of Hebrew poetry. But there is fairly frequent division of lines at the 'caesura,' as in

'mutabit merces: omnis feret omnia tellus,'

and looking at Virgil's versification in the Eclogues generally, I think that one must say that, writing on a graver theme, with solemnity and artistic finish, he would write very much what he has written. There is no certain inference that he had any extraneous model before him.<sup>1</sup>

The occasion of the Eclogue has been recently discussed by Professor W. M. Ramsay, who, while reviving the theory that Virgil was acquainted with Jewish ideas, develops also a suggestion which had been made by Kiessling, that Virgil had in view the sixteenth *Epode* of Horace, and intended to reply to it. Horace despairs of his country. Rome is wasting its strength in endless civic conflict.

<sup>1</sup> It is clear that Virgil had in mind a poem of Catullus—the 'Epithalamium Peleus et Thetidis' with its prediction of Achilles' birth and prowess. 'Talia saecula, suis dixerunt, currite, fuis' is an unmistakable reminiscence. It is characteristic of Catullus that the sense often ends with the end of the line. Moreover, the rhythm 'mutábit véllera lúto,' 'crescéntes véstiet ágnos,' is frequent in Catullus and his contemporaries, as is the ending 'magnum Iovis incrementum.' The versification of the Eclogue seems to be sufficiently accounted for by Roman precedent.

It seems even possible that the association of the Golden Age with the birth and growth of a child—the thing for which it is hardest to find any analogy in Greek and Roman legend—is explained by the influence of Catullus.

He appeals to the better-minded of her citizens, who have still some spirit and courage left, to abandon Italy and seek a new home in the Western Ocean, where Jupiter has reserved for the righteous the Islands of the Blest. The Romans are to follow the example of the Phocaeans, who left their homes in Asia to found Massilia in the distant West. Virgil's view—or his answer to Horace—is that the Golden Age is beginning here and now, in Italy, and he predicts in the near future the realisation of the blessings which for Horace are attainable only by emigration. There are striking coincidences in the language and thought of the two poets when they describe these blessings. But it is, perhaps, unsafe to argue from these similarities; for clearly the life of the Golden Age or the Golden Race had certain fixed and traditional characteristics which any poet who dealt with it must include in his picture. It seems fairly probable, but not certain, that Virgil is definitely and deliberately answering Horace. His poem is in effect an answer to Horace, and the suggestion is instructive, because it calls attention to a difference in the careers of the two great

poets of the Augustan age. Horace, who had fought at Philippi, was later and slower in reconciling himself to the new order of things. He was for long reserved and reluctant in his commendation of the new ruler of Rome.

The Fourth *Eclogue* must remain a somewhat mysterious, if impressive and beautiful, poem. The clue to its precise meaning seems to be lost. The difficulty of identifying the child is so great that we are almost driven to suppose that Virgil had *no* particular child in view, and was speaking of an imaginary representative of the new and happier generation. But no doubt there are phrases in the poem which it is rather difficult to interpret on this supposition, and which have the air of being uttered about a child of special promise and distinction.

Criticism of the poem has sometimes taken erroneous paths. One mistake which we must guard against is that of taking it too seriously and of looking for a deeper or more exact meaning in it than the poet intended to convey. Much of it may be merely fanciful, a graceful experiment in a particular vein of

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composition, like some of the other Eclogues. Another mistake, or perhaps rather a false impression conveyed unintentionally by the critic, lies in regarding the poem as accounted for by the precedents which can be found and as made up of suggestions from Hesiod or Aratus or Catullus. Virgil's work can almost always be analysed in this way, and almost always the analysis misrepresents it: it is full of echoes from the past, and yet it is at the same time a new thing. Virgil transmuted what he touched, as he has done in this eclogue. Old memories and fancies of an age of gold he has woven into a new Italian idyll, a vision of Italy as it might be under happier conditions. In this respect, though there are many points of divergence, the eclogue resembles Shelley's poem on the regeneration of Greece, which would be treated with equal injustice if it were resolved into the classical ideas or allusions which appear in it. Both poems have in some degree the vagueness or obscurity which belongs to a prophetic vision: the seer is trying to read the story of a strange future, and has no language in which to express it save the ideas

and traditions of the past, which are of necessity inadequate. It would be as idle to try to identify Shelley's 'loftier Argo' and 'new Ulysses,' as it is to rationalise with prosaic literalness the dream of Virgil.

After Virgil—we need not say 'in Virgil,' nor need we condemn him for setting the fashion—the vision of a Golden Age became a form of flattery addressed to a new Emperor. In the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius, Nero is hailed as the founder of a new age of Saturn and of Numa—

'Plena quies aderit, quae stricti nescia ferri  
Altera Saturni referet Latialia regna,  
Altera regna Numae.'<sup>1</sup>

Nero bitterly disappointed such hopes, though his first five years, the 'quinquennium Neronis,' were a time of happiness and prosperity. Augustus attained to power through much callous bloodshed, and he established a virtual despotism in a free state; but, on the whole, if we weigh justly his great services and achievements, he may fairly be said to have brought about at Rome an Age of Gold—not in the sense of the poetic vision, but at all

<sup>1</sup> Calp., *Ed.* 1. 63 f.

events an age which was golden by contrast with the age of iron, of disorder, and of civil war, which immediately preceded it.

## NOTE.

When I wrote this lecture, in the autumn of 1901, I had not seen a very interesting book, published in that year, Prof. Franz Skutsch's *Aus Vergil's Frühzeit*. If it is true that the *Ciris* is the work of Cornelius Gallus, the σπονδαίων 'cara deum suloles, magnum Iovis incrementum' was not merely due to the influence of the 'cantores Euphorionis,' but was actually borrowed, with very slight variation, from the 'cantor Euphorionis,' Gallus, Virgil's elder contemporary, who forms a link between the preceding generation of poets and the Augustans.

Dr. Skutsch discusses the Fourth Eclogue in an excursus (p. 148 f.). He argues against the claim of Asinius Gallus, laying stress on the mention of Pollio's consulship and the absence of any hint that he stands in a closer relationship to the child: and pointing out that though it is certain that Asconius was told by Gallus that he, Gallus, was the child in question, it is by no means certain that Asconius thought the claim valid (p. 151). I am now disposed to think that Gallus' claim may be dismissed as one of his efforts to pose as a possible successor to the Principate (Augustus in discussing claimants had pronounced him '*avidum et minorem*,' Tac. *Ann.*, I. xiii.). And, in view of Dr. Skutsch's arguments, I am also inclined to accede to the view that the child

was probably the expected child of Octavian and Scribonia. (The child is not yet born. In rightly arguing that the whole poem to its close precedes the child's birth, and quoting 'casta fave Lucina,' p. 158, the writer raises a doubt about his knowledge of elementary prosody by seeming to suggest that Virgil might have written 'casta fâvit Lucina'!) The main argument lies in the position of Octavian, which even by 40 B.C. was, I admit, one of such eminence as to make it unlikely that what is said in the Eclogue could be said of any child but his. The allusion to Apollo, it is contended, points to the same conclusion (l. 10, *tuus iam regnat Apollo*—Octavian regarded Apollo as his special protector, from a quite early period in his life). Dr. Skutsch also points out that Martial published an epigram, similar in theme and language to the Fourth Eclogue, although the hope which it expressed was never fulfilled (vi. iii.): and that it would not be in Virgil's power to retract the poem. when it had once been presented to Octavian and had become known to his friends (quoting Statius, *Silvae*, iv. Praef.: *iam domino Caesari dederam et quanto hoc plus est quam edere*).

It is a simple but perhaps not unimportant consideration that in a case like this a Roman poet was confronted by a merely grammatical or linguistic difficulty. There was no ambiguous word like 'child' or a neuter like τέκνον. He could say only 'puer' (as Statius does in his Epithalamium, *Silvae*, i. ii.): 'puer' would therefore be understood, we may suppose, as meaning either 'puer' or 'puella': but if this was so, the poem would not be rendered ludicrous by the birth of a girl. There is moreover a possibility that

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after the event Virgil 'licked' his poem into a slightly different shape—he is credited with saying 'parere se versus more atque ritu ursino'—and made it rather more ideal and symbolical than it had been at first.

V.

THE VEIN OF ROMANCE IN GREEK  
AND ROMAN LITERATURE.<sup>1</sup>

Callimachi numeris non est dicendus Achilles :  
Cydippe non est oris, Homere, tui.

—OVID.

SCARCELY any inquiry regarding classical poetry can be entered upon without some reference to the poems of Homer. They meet us at the outset, at the very threshold of Greek literary history, and they dominated and influenced its future course to a singular extent. And yet they are hardly in connection with it. They stand in strange isolation, like an island near a continent.

<sup>1</sup>A Lecture delivered to the Edinburgh University Celtic Society, October, 1895. I am, of course, largely indebted to Rohde's book, *Der griechische Roman*. What is said of Stesichorus' Oresteia comes from C. Robert's *Bild und Lied*. Konrad of Würzburg is known to me only through E. H. Meyer's *Homer und die Ilias*.

Nothing that preceded them has survived, and after them there is a gap, a chasm—we come to sheer cliff and sundering waters on the other side of our island too. It is on the whole a Greek island, a world bearing distinct traces of affinity with the Greece we know. But how different in many ways, and, above all, how wide and varied in its contents, how much a microcosm of human life generally, how universal and ideal in the scenes it presents to us! Hardly any side of human life is unrepresented there. There is hardly any note or cadence struck by later poets that does not somewhere or somehow sound for us on the strings of Homer's lyre. So that even if we are looking for 'romance'—a thing so unhellenic in many ways—we must expect to find something in Homer. And in one sense of the word 'romance,' that of strange and perilous adventure in distant lands, we find it very clearly in the *Odyssey*. The huge one-eyed giant whom Odysseus blinded and outwitted, the savage Laestrygon, the seething waters of Charybdis—these are things which stand almost alone in Greek Literature: they are the literary romance which is developed out of *fairy tales* of the

people—that popular, minor mythology which so rarely came to the surface in the literature of Greece. Scylla and Charybdis are Scandinavian rather than Greek: they recall the Kraken and the Maelstrom and the other marvels of the Northern Sea. It would be interesting to inquire here whether, besides what is Teutonic or Scandinavian, there is anything in Homer that shows affinity with the Celtic imagination. Matthew Arnold was no doubt right in tracing to the Celts a sense for the magic and mystery of Nature, a spirit that is at home in mist and storm and amid wild mountains, and that has strange glimpses of the unearthly and supernatural. In Homer, we must reply, there is little or nothing of this. Perhaps the most Celtic passage in Homer is that wonderful vision of Theoclymenus in the *Odyssey* (xx. 350 f.), where the seer beholds the impending fate of the suitors approaching, the shadow of death clouding the joys of the feast.

But both the Scandinavian and the Celtic things in Homer are quite exceptional. The poet is on the whole a typical Greek. He moves in the light of common day: he is prosaic,

practical, he sees things as they are, undistorted—or unglorified—by the rainbow colours of imagination; and even the gods themselves appear on the stage without impressing us with any feeling of mystery or marvel. Altogether, we might almost set out on our quest for the romantic by defining it as the *unhomer*. So far as the passion of love forms a part of romance, we must recognise Homer's extreme restraint and reticence upon that theme, even where his story gave opportunities for it, as in the histories of Calypso or Nausicaa.

Greek Literature seems to have developed itself in a very natural and simple way. Poetry passed through three great periods: the Epic, Lyric, and Dramatic. It is not altogether fanciful to describe these three stages or periods as those of boyhood, youth, and manhood. First comes the boy's delight in adventure and heroic deeds, next the emotional and introspective fervour of adolescence, finally a restoration of vigour and delight in action—but with a difference—in manhood. So we may say that in Homer we have the poetry of the Outer Life, in the Lyric poets that of the Inner Life of emotion and thought, in the Drama a combination of

the two, where action is seen in its relation to inward motive and character. We need not inquire whether the life of a nation always and of necessity passes through the same phases as that of an individual. There is certainly an analogy in the particular case of Greece: and more generally, it may be remarked, that literature and life form an ideal world in which man lives his life over again, and that naturally what is most easily reproduced appears in this new world first. It is easy to tell a straightforward story: not very difficult to say, 'I love,' or 'I hate': but much harder to delineate human life as a whole, the conflict of character and circumstance, with full insight.

We should expect to find some movement towards romance in the fervid period of adolescence—the seventh and sixth centuries—which intervenes between the Epos and the Drama. And such a tendency there is. I do not think that we can really include the poems of Sappho under this head. The white heat and glow of real passion, the expression of what one feels at the moment one's self—this is hardly what is meant by 'romance' strictly. It is too direct and simple, too completely free from fancy, senti-

ment, and second thoughts. 'Romance' results rather when we sympathise with the emotions of a hero or heroine of story—when the emotions are not the actual ones of the moment, not those we are ourselves feeling intensely, but at most our own feelings projected, as it were, into a remote region, idealised and reproduced in new conditions. In romance we are, to a certain extent, outside of our own emotions—thinking about them, making much of them, looking at them. Sappho and Alcaeus were too much absorbed in their own feelings—too rarely getting *outside of them* in this way—to be classed as 'romantic.'

What we are looking for appears in other writers of that age. Hesiod, or some poet of Hesiod's school, composed an epic with a title answering to 'The Legend of Fair Women.' The Greeks did not give play to their fancy in the names of books, and it was called only 'Κατάλογος Γυναικῶν.' But it related stories which we should be disposed to call romantic. Such, for example, was that of Apollo and Coronis. Coronis was a fair maiden of Thessaly, who was one day sitting on the bank of the Boebean lake, dipping her foot in its waters.

Apollo saw her and fell under the spell of her beauty. She became the bride of the Delphian god. But the story had a darker sequel. Coronis forgot her divine lover, and gave her hand to an Arcadian stranger. Her punishment was death, and vengeance fell also upon Apollo's messenger, the Raven, who had reported her faithlessness. Hitherto the bird's plumage had been of the purest white, 'vying with the swan, with milk, with the foam of the crested wave'; after this rash, but no doubt well-meant, intervention in the love affairs of his master, the raven was doomed to wear feathers black as pitch—a penalty which Athena had previously inflicted upon the Crow for a similar indiscretion.<sup>1</sup>

Here we may pause to note, as in the matter of the Cyclops and Charybdis, that what is

<sup>1</sup> ἢ νύξ ἢ ἐνδιος ἢ ἔσσε' ἥως  
εὔτε κόραξ, ὅς νῦν γε καὶ ἀν κύκνοις ἐρίξαι  
καὶ γάλακι χροίην καὶ κύματος ἀκρῇ δάπτῃ  
κύανεον φῆ πίσσαν ἐπὶ πτερὸν οὐλοδὸν ἔσσει  
ἀγγελίης ἐπίχειρα τὰ ὅς ποτε Φοῖβος ὀπάσσει.

—CALLIMACHUS, *Heale*, Fr.

Callimachus no doubt derived his information from Hesiod (*cf. Eocorum fragmenta*, 143, ed. Kinkel), a poet who was prized—perhaps too highly—at Alexandria. Another long 'fragment' of the *Heale*—preserved in a very fragmentary condition—relates the misdeeds of the Crow.

romantic in classical literature is associated with, if not identical with, popular legend, the tales told by the common people, the fanciful fairy tales of local belief. Transformations—magical changes of shape and colour—play a large part in this minor mythology, and, to cast a glance for a moment into the remote future, these stories were collected by Alexandrian writers, and adopted from them by *Ovid*. The curious and often romantic stories of the 'Metamorphoses' exercised not a little influence on the imagination of medieval writers, and upon the beginnings of modern literature.

In the lyric age of Greece the poet who has the strongest claim to be thought 'romantic' is Stesichorus of Himera, the choric poet of Sicily. Tradition associated him with Hesiod, even making him a son of the Boeotian minstrel. At all events he did two things which were not without influence and importance for Greek literary history. He told in verse several romantic stories. The tale of Kalyke was very simple: that of a maiden who was spurned by the object of her love, Euathlos, and who threw herself in despair from the Leucadian cliff. In the story of Rhadina we have more complicated

incident. Rhadina, the destined bride of the Tyrant of Corinth, sailed from Samos to that city. The same wind brought her brother, who was on his way to Delphi as the leader of a *θεωρία* or sacred embassy. Her cousin, who was in love with her, came on a chariot to Corinth. The Tyrant killed them both and sent away their bodies on a chariot: but afterwards repented and gave them burial. Here we have two tales of unhappy love, and of ordinary lovers in private life, not of gods or heroes. Stesichorus also introduced into Greek literature the figure of Daphnis, and here we touch upon another and not unromantic vein of literature, which it would be interesting to trace if time allowed—Idyllic or Pastoral poetry. Daphnis was beloved by a nymph, but he broke faith with her and wedded the daughter of a king: whereupon the nymph blinded him and brought him to a miserable death.

Besides relating these stories Stesichorus did much to reshape and modify the old heroic legends—to recast them in a more romantic form, adding new and startling incidents, introducing new scenes of emotion, and developing the characters of the women who played a

part in them. Homer does not seem to have thought of Orestes as killing his mother, Clytaemnestra. Aegisthus is the arch-offender with him, and Orestes only 'gains great glory by slaying his father's murderer.' Stesichorus developed the character of Clytaemnestra. She, and not Aegisthus, became the ringleader in the plot against Agamemnon: she cut down her husband with her own hand, thus provoking and deserving her death at her son's hands. And when Orestes came back, in manhood, to take vengeance on Aegisthus, Clytaemnestra swung above his head the *same axe* with which Agamemnon had been slain years before. Her hand was arrested by the aged herald Talthybius. The strange dream of Clytaemnestra,<sup>1</sup> of the snake which she bore, and which drew blood from her breast, was the work of Stesichorus; as was also the pathetic meeting of Electra and Orestes, sister and brother, at their

<sup>1</sup> τῷ δὲ δράκων ἐδόκησεν μολεῖν κέρα βεβρωμένος ἄκρον,  
ἐκ δ' ἄρα τοῦ βασιλεὺς Πλεισθενίδας ἐφάνη.

C. Robert argues plausibly that in Stesichorus Clytaemnestra's dream was more complicated than Aeschylus made it, and that 'Plisthenidas' means Agamemnon, wounded on the head by the axe. Both father and son appear in the dream. Sophocles substituted for this dream a less startling one borrowed from Herodotus.

murdered father's tomb. The lyric 'Oresteia' of Stesichorus is lost, but these features of the story as told by him can be made out, from various pieces of evidence, with something like certainty.

Here we may pause again to make another remark. Romance is naturally associated with women and their emotions—if it is concerned with the inner life of feeling it must inevitably deal with the sex which is less actively engaged in the work and business of the world. Now the Greek States differed very much in their treatment of women. Among the Ionians and Athenians women lived in seclusion, enjoyed little freedom, and had few opportunities of education. The Homeric poems are substantially the work of Ionians. Greek tragedy is Athenian. Neither in Homer nor the Drama is there a romantic tone. The state of things was different among the Dorians and Aeolians. It is among them and not among Ionians that romance is to be looked for. Stesichorus was a Dorian poet.

In the fifth century B.C. Athens came to the front. Athenian ideas and Athenian culture prevailed. Sophocles and Phidias took the

lead in literary and in plastic art. And Athenian civilization was adverse to the claims of women, and adverse to romance. So far as Attic tragedy makes much of female characters, it is because earlier poets like Stesichorus had set the example, and because the free and simple air of the Homeric world is still largely the atmosphere in which the personages of tragedy move. It was only when the power of Athens began to decline, when the Athenian empire was beginning to fall to pieces, that tragedy took a more romantic turn, that attention was turned away from the deeds of great national heroes, and conflicts of moral and political duties or ideas: and turned towards the emotions and passions of an individual soul, the trials and temptations of personal or private life. It was in Euripides that this tendency first manifested itself, and there are indications that his treatment of Love in particular found many imitators among the later tragic poets. 'Time would fail me,' says Ovid, 'if I were to enumerate the love-stories of tragedy: tragedy, too, makes love its constant theme.'<sup>1</sup> Perhaps

<sup>1</sup> 'Tempore deficiat, tragicos si persequar ignes:  
haec quoque materiem semper amoris habet.'

this is an exaggeration. We must not put too much of Euripides as a romanticist. His characters like those of Phædra are hardly so. Love is still thought of as a sort of plague pestilence sent by an angry deity, *θηλαστα*. But certainly Euripides has a large measure of what we may call romance. In him other emotions are made much of, and are an object of reflection, sentiment, and instead of being directly and simply expressed as they had been by Sappho, or, on a lower level and in a more sensual way, by Mimnermus.

A contemporary of Euripides is Antimachus, of importance for our inquiry. He is a poet of whom only a few lines have been preserved, but he enjoyed a great reputation in the ancient world, and he numbered among his fervent admirers no less a personage than Theocritus. The poet is Antimachus of Colophon. His largest work was a *Thebais*—an epic story of the sons of Oedipus and the fate of Thebes. We are told that he had composed the *Twenty-fourth book* without having yet seen the invading force up to the walls of the city. Perhaps therefore we need not greatly regret the loss of this work: certainly it is a

have been too heavy to float down to us on the stream of time. Antimachus, it is said, was once reading his manuscript to a large audience, and when at last he looked up from the page, he saw before him a prospect of empty benches! His hearers had gradually melted away. Only one solitary enthusiast remained. It was Plato. And Antimachus made a remark which became famous, 'One is as good as ten thousand,' *εἰς ἐμοὶ μύριοι.*

If this story is characteristic—if Antimachus really cared little for popular applause—it causes us to think of him as an Alexandrian born before his time—a poet who would have been at home in Alexandria a century and a half later. For it was the tendency of the Alexandrian poets to write for the cultured few, for a circle of scholars and critics, not for the great mass of the people. This is one Alexandrian trait in Antimachus. And in the poem with which we are here concerned—the Elegiac 'Lyde'—Antimachus was undoubtedly Alexandrian in method and spirit. Whether Lyde was a real living woman or not we do not know. But what the poet did was to console himself for the real or feigned loss of

his mistress by collecting together all the stories of 'star-crossed lovers' that the mythology and legend of Greece presented to him. Here we have something very different from the real and vivid passion of a Sappho or a Mimnermus: and this 'something' is precisely what we find in the poets of Alexandria in the third century B.C. The vein opened by Antimachus was worked by them. The Alexandrians come between classic Greece and classic Rome. We seem to breathe a different air when we come from Sophocles to Propertius or Ovid. The feelings of poets and their ways of thinking and their views of life have undergone a great change. The change is largely due to Alexandrians who intervened. It is for us a startling change. There is an apparent chasm or hiatus, because the elegiac poems of Alexandria have all but completely perished.

We saw that the decline of the political power of Athens coincided with a change in the spirit of tragedy. The same change is traceable still more clearly at Alexandria. 'Love is an idle thing and assails the idle' (*ἔρως γὰρ ἀργὸν καὶ τὰς ἀργοῖς ἔφνυ*), Euripides himself had written. Alexandria may be held to illus-

trate the dictum. Political interests and activities there were none. Alexandrian poets lived under a despotism, and a despotism gives its subjects a good deal of leisure for their private affairs. Personal emotion and personal relations, the interests of everyday life, attract the energies which would otherwise be absorbed by politics. We may remember too that there was much feminine influence at Alexandria. A Berenice or an Arsinoë, the queens and great ladies of the court, were powerful in society and required of the poet that he should flatter, amuse or interest them.

Under these conditions literature assumed a new shape and colour. Poetry was no longer inspired by patriotism, by national ideas or by national religion: no longer have we anything like the great style of Aeschylus—

‘The thunder-phrase of the Athenian, grown  
Up out of memories of Marathon.’

We have rather the romance and the idyll. Interest centres in the feelings of individuals and in the softer emotions of human nature, or it turns upon the simplicities of rustic life and humble occupations; the poet tells us a tale of love, or he idealizes for us the more pleasing

aspects of everyday life, and presents them in poems of small compass and finished workmanship, such as those of Theocritus.

Callimachus and Apollonius were leading men of letters at Alexandria. They were opposed in many points, and they were at feud for a long time. They differed in the vein of romance which they cultivated. Callimachus sought out new stories, unearthing them from local records or collecting them from the lips of the people of a place. Apollonius ventured to treat in a romantic way an old heroic story. The work of these two poets is of some importance for our enquiry.

The most famous love-story of Alexandrian times was that of Acontius and Cydippe, related by Callimachus in his *Ἀκτῖα* or *Origines*—a comprehensive poem in elegiacs, in which he put together the results of his researches into local legend and tradition. Acontius came to Delos for the festival of Artemis. At the temple of the goddess he saw Cydippe, who had brought an offering and was engaged in sacrifice. He threw at her feet an apple, on which he had traced the words, 'I vow by the sanctuary of Artemis to marry Acontius.' Cydippe in-

tiously read the words aloud, and the goddess read them. Acontius went home to brood on his passion and its apparent hopelessness. In the course of time Cydippe's father found a band for her. But on the eve of the wedding she was struck down by illness. Again a wedding was arranged, and once more prevented by the same occurrence. A third time it happened, and her father now consulted the oracle of Delphi. Apollo told him that Cydippe had broken a vow made to his sister Demeter. The affair was explained, and Cydippe's father was brought to consent to her marriage with Acontius.

This is a typical story. It is just the sort of story which the later novelists of Greece told at great length in prose. One of its typical features is worth notice. Acontius sees Cydippe at a great public gathering, a festival and sacrifice. The frequency of this incident in Greek stories is due to the simple fact that a festival was almost the only occasion on which, under the conditions of ancient society, a meeting was possible. No fewer than three of the novelists avail themselves of this device for bringing about an acquaintance between their lovers.

That they owed a great deal to Alexandrian elegy seems unquestionable, and this turn of incident is certainly common to it and them.

Apollonius set himself a different task. He took up one of the old heroic stories and treated it in an epic of some length. The great legends of early Greece were those of the Argonautic Expedition, the Siege of Thebes, and the Siege of Troy, to which we may perhaps add the Hunting of the Boar in Calydon. Apollonius chose of the three great subjects the one which lent itself most readily to a romantic treatment. The expedition of Jason to bring the Golden Fleece from Colchis combined the interest of travel and adventure with the interest of Love. The subject had been often treated by poets of the earlier ages, but most of their work is lost. In an ode of Pindar—the Fourth Pythian—the story is told in lyric verse of great power and splendour. The spirit of adventure is there, the resolution to face the perils of strange seas and hostile peoples. 'Their leader took a golden goblet in his hands, and stood upon the poop and called upon Zeus, father of the Immortals, whose spear is the thunderbolt, and upon the rushing waves

and rushing winds to give him swift passage, on the nights and the ways of the sea; and for kindly days he prayed, and the sweet reward of home-coming' (193-196). Great deeds are to be done. The restless rocks become motionless after the passage of the Argo: the 'silence of the seas' is broken, and a way is opened for the passage of ships.<sup>1</sup> But Pindar makes little of the love-story. He passes it over very briefly. He only tells us that Aphrodite for the first time showed to mortals the love-charm which consisted in binding the bird called the wryneck (ὠρυξ) to a wheel—nothing at all is made of the emotions and trials of Medea.

The romance of navigation always had a great fascination for the Greeks, and even the laborious Alexandrian has some touch of this. But, unlike Pindar, he is far more successful in the love-story than in the story of adventure. In relating the voyage he is too much of an archaeologist and a geographer, but in his third book he relates the conflicting emotions of the

<sup>1</sup> Statius (whose father lectured on Pindaric metre) has a phrase for this which is not unlike Pindar's manner:

'Ex quo iura freti maiestatemque repostam  
rupit Iasonia puppis Pagasaea carina.'

—*Achilleis* i. 64-5.

youthful Medea with much sympathy and power. Euripides, who intervenes between Pindar and Apollonius, had delineated a later struggle in her life, her quarrel with Jason and fatal jealousy at Corinth. Apollonius presents her to us as a maiden in her father's halls, distracted between love and duty. 'As she slept, evil dreams beguiled her troubled heart. She saw the stranger set himself to his dread task; not because he desired to bear away the ram's fleece—not for that had he come to the Land of Aetes, but that he might carry her, Medea, to his home as a bride. She herself contended with the fire-breathing bulls and easily tamed them. Then her parents broke their promise; they had not, said they, enjoined it upon a maiden to yoke the creatures, but upon Jason himself. So her father and the strangers came to angry words. And then they called upon her to decide the issue; it should be as she wished. And suddenly she chose the stranger's part, and her parents were nought to her. Great grief fell upon them, and they cried aloud upon their daughter, and the cry awoke her, and she started trembling from her sleep' (*Argon.* iii. 617 f.). Nothing could be less like Homer

than this. Hardly by any stretch of imagination can we think of Homer describing that dream.

I have dwelt too long upon the earlier stages of my subject, and what remains must be told very briefly. The literary ideas and methods of Alexandria found their way to Rome in Cicero's time. Instructed by a living Alexandrian scholar, Parthenius, the brilliant group of young poets of whom Catullus was one (Calvus and Cinna are the best known of the others) set themselves to produce in Latin the same kind of short, elaborately finished, and more or less romantic poems which had been in vogue at Alexandria. In the next generation, Virgil set himself to the same kind of task as Apollonius had attempted, to re-tell at length a great heroic story. But, besides his own more gifted nature Virgil had what Apollonius lacked—national inspiration, the impulse of patriotism, the force and impressiveness which a national idea gives to its interpreter. The romantic element in Virgil is often compared with Apollonius' romance, the story of Dido with the story of Medea. But there is really a vast difference between the youthful, inexperienced Medea of Apollonius

and the powerful queen of Carthage. It is not Medea, but another heroine of Apollonius—Hypsipyle, queen of Lemnos, whom Jason meets in the first book—that most closely resembles Dido.

In the history of the world's literature Ovid plays an important part. He did a great deal for the 'minor mythology' of romance and local legend. He made it accessible. The Alexandrians had been brief and laborious in diction, often deliberately obscure. Ovid re-told their stories in language which stands at the opposite pole of literary quality—language which is simple, lucid, and diffuse, free from tortuous construction or recondite allusion. Hence it was from Ovid that the Middle Ages and the Renaissance drew their knowledge of the old classical romances. The stories were told again by Italians at and before Chaucer's time. In the *Legende of Fair Women*, Chaucer re-tells the tale of Medea.

'In Thessalye as Ovyde telleth us  
There reignd a king y-cleped Pelias.'

The three best MSS. are said to have 'Guido' for Ovyde—and probably 'Guido' is right. The tale came directly from Guido, indirectly from Ovid.

In Roman imperial times we come upon the

group of writers—if they are contiguous to be called a group—known as ‘scriptotici.’ They told stories like that of *Andromache* and *Cydippe*, at great length, and with richness of detail. As a literary product, their work is rather instructive. Their stories are of the bulk and extent of a modern novel: it is worth while to enquire how they differ from the modern novel in their contents. The character of the modern novel is largely that of a record of emotional experience presented in detail. The reader must come to know the personages of the tale, must come to know the workings of their minds, their characters, their subtleties and its inmost recesses. The truth can be attained only by bringing the personages into varied circumstances, into contact with other people, and by describing these with richness. Hence the result is a long story. The Greek novelists had this length, but not this depth. They expanded their tales with a much simpler and more mechanical device. They thrust into them a mass of fantastic adventures, strange journeys, and improbable misadventures. They had little psychological insight, little analysis of character. The original love-

story was almost lost in this extraneous accession of matter. The matter was derived largely from a vein of Greek literature which I have not mentioned—the narratives of Hyperboreans and Aethiopians, of Pigmies and Giants, of Indians and Scythians, told by chroniclers as old as Herodotus, but less sober and judicious, who are parodied by Lucian in his *Vera Historia*.

The later Roman empire saw also the beginning of the process by which the 'Tale of Troy Divine,' was turned into a medieval romance. Two very curious Latin writings of the 5th century gave the impulse. One professed to be a contemporary account of the Trojan war, found at Athens by Cornelius Nepos, and translated by him into Latin. 'Dares Phrygius'—he is that same 'wealthy and blameless priest of Hephaestus' whom Homer mentions—relates in bare and matter-of-fact prose the story of the siege. The other—the 'diary' of 'Dictys Creten-sis,' a contemporary of the events—commends itself as authentic by a still more remarkable story. Dictys was a comrade of Idomeneus. He wrote down a narrative on pages of linden-bark, and directed that it should be buried with him. In the thirteenth year of Nero's reign an

earthquake shook the district of Gnosus and brought to light the tomb of Dictys. In the tomb was a tin-box (*stannea arcula*), which the shepherds took to one Eupraxides, who handed it over to the Roman governor of the island. The governor sent it to Nero, and Nero caused it to be deciphered by scholars who knew the Phoenician characters in which it was written. This is an anticipation of modern methods—it reminds us of Defoe, or of the more recent tales of Mr. Rider Haggard.

Out of these materials medieval minstrels produced a very strange tale of Troy. In the thirteenth century Konrad of Würtzburg, the last great German poet of the Middle Ages, wrote a poem on the Trojan war in 50,000 lines, in which the old Greek story is decked out in all the gay colours and trappings of western romance. The whole world sends contingents to Troy, even Ireland and the Orkneys. The Olympians appear only at the wedding of Peleus, and before Paris. They are excluded from the story, for Konrad believes them to have been only men who lived in woods and caves under their leader Jupiter, and fraudulently acquired divine honours by their knowledge of magic plants and stones.

Love plays an important part in the narrative. Helen and Polyxena appear on the wall, and the sight of them inspires the knights with new zeal and courage. Menelaus turns green as a leaf with jealous rage when he sees Paris and Helen together on the rampart. Hector assails the Greeks as a crocodile comes out of the reeds and falls upon sheep. The chariots have disappeared, we have knightly tournaments with lance in rest, and the funeral games of Patroclus are brought to a close with a match at chess!

It remains to say a few words upon the question which I avoided at the beginning—the meaning which we are to attach to ‘romance.’

The spirit of Homer is on the whole one of acquiescence in things as they are, acceptance of the inevitable; the spirit which

‘with a frolic welcome takes  
sunshine and shadow,’

which does not ask embarrassing questions about life, or lose itself in gloomy forebodings, or dwell upon its own emotions until they become morbid and overstrained. ‘We must bury him who falls, and weep only for a day; we must harden our hearts and renew the

battle to-morrow.<sup>1</sup> The loss of comrades may be grievous, but nothing is really changed. There stands Mount Ida, there is Troy, still to be taken, *ἔτι γὰρ μέγα ἔργον ἄρεκτον*. Or let us take rather a passage which Virgil has imitated. Achilles in book xx. (l. 391) says to Iphition whom he has mortally wounded: 'Here is thy death—thy birth was by the Gygean lake.' Virgil in similar words himself addresses a fallen hero: 'Here thy race was run, thy goal reached: under Ida stands thy high home; thy high home at Lyrnessus, in Laurentian earth thy grave.'<sup>2</sup> The *poet himself* addresses the dying warrior in sympathetic tones: he rebels against the hardness of fate, he cannot quite accept it with equanimity. Homer is imperturbable and impersonal.

The romantic poet or artist shows a certain discontent, a certain restlessness. He tries to escape from the hard conditions of the world about him. 'Acquiescence' and 'Aspiration' or 'Discontent' are words which carry us some way towards understanding the difference

<sup>1</sup> *Iliad* xix. 228-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Hic tibi mortis erant metae, domus alta sub Ida,  
Lyrnessi domus alta, solo Laurente sepulcrum.*

—*Aen.* xii. 546-7.

between the classical and the romantic spirit, but they are of course nothing like a final definition or explanation.

The classical artist is more tranquil and self-possessed, he has time to bestow pains upon the *form* of his work, he gives it balance and clearness of outline. The romantic poet is less master of himself: he shrinks a little from what is painful: he loves to dwell upon the softer and gentler emotions: very often he lives in an idealized past—a past that was never present: or he flies to strange and distant countries, where life is happier or more exciting: or he pursues spiritual ideals and aspires to what is not of this earth at all. Sometimes he conquers a new province for the human mind, and becomes a classic for the next generation: sometimes he pursues paths that lead nowhere, and loses himself in regions of mist and hallucination.

It has been said that every man is born a Platonist or an Aristotelian: and perhaps it may be said also that every man is born a classicist or a romanticist. To go back from the most fervent works of modern romance to Sophocles or Phidias is a trans-

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ition which will strike the two types of mind very differently. The one would describe it as leaving the heat and glare of a lighted theatre for the cool air and the quiet stars. The other will think of it as coming down from the heights of heaven to the dull routine of earthly existence and the hard daylight of ordinary life. To those who have felt the fervour of a later age, the classical art will always seem a little cold, a little formal and rigid. But tranquillity, soundness of mind, and clearness of vision are great qualities, and they make the best classical art and life a thing to which we must always recur to correct what is feverish, erratic, or overstrained in romantic thought and art.

## VI.

### THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY.<sup>1</sup>

ὥς εἰσῆλθε γάρ,  
εὐθύς μ' ἐπηρώτησε προσβλέψας μέγα  
'πόσους κέκληκας μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; λέγε.'  
'ἐγὼ κέκληκα μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον; χολᾶθ.  
τοὺς δὲ μέροπας τούτους με γινώσκειν δοκεῖς;  
οὐδεὶς πάρεσται. τοῦτο γὰρ ἢ τὸν Δία  
ἐστὶ κατάλοιπον, μέροπας ἐπὶ δεῖπνον καλεῖν!'

—(STRATO, apud Athen. ix. p. 383.)

CICERO in the *De Oratore* makes the old Roman orator Antonius say that he limits his reading to orators and historians whom he can understand: the poets he avoids altogether, as 'speaking in what is really a different language.'<sup>2</sup> No one can read much serious poetry without observing that what is here said of poets is

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered to the Classical Society of Glasgow University, January 11th, 1903.

<sup>2</sup> Poetas omnino quasi alia quadam lingua locutos non conor attingere. *De Orat.* ii. 61.

true in a quite literal sense. They do speak a different language. Neither their words, nor their ways of putting things, nor their constructions are the same as those of prose-writers. Let us illustrate this by a simple example in Latin. The line of Tennyson 'and thinking of the days that are no more' is neatly turned into Latin in a version by Sir Richard Jebb; the words are 'et lapsos revoco sub pectore soles.' Consider how the same thought would be expressed in Latin prose. We should find ourselves saying something like this: 'subit animum praeteriti temporis recordatio' or 'memoria.' The two renderings, in verse and in prose, have not a word—not a single word—in common. The original words of Tennyson are extremely simple: we can hardly say that they differ from the vocabulary of prose, except perhaps that 'are no more' is a slightly poetic way of saying 'are past.' The Latin words would certainly not be used by a Roman prose-writer to express that thought: but they are words which *may* be used in prose, they are not excluded from the language of prose altogether. Recall now some obvious facts about the language of great poets, how the Attic tragedians, for example, use *δῶμος*

or δῶμα for 'house' and ἀλή for strength, where a prose-writer would say οἰκία and ῥώμη or ἰσχὺς respectively. Here we seem to have a further step in the direction of a poetic language. For δόμος and ἀλή are words which an Attic prose-writer does not normally use at all. It would be premature at this stage in the inquiry to place the three languages in an ascending or descending scale and to say that Greek has the largest poetic vocabulary, and English the smallest, while Latin stands between them. But it is at least clear that different languages and literatures may differ very widely in this respect. It is clear also that poets have very often spoken 'in quite another tongue.' We are led to ask, 'Why should they?' and we hear voices saying more clamorously, 'Why, indeed? The practice is absurd, and poets should discard it once for all.' Such a protest was made by Wordsworth in his celebrated *Preface*. But Wordsworth was not the first to make it. Like many modern things, it has a precedent in Greece. The same voice speaks in a passage of the comic poet Antiphanes which has been preserved for us. There are two speakers: one of them proposes various turgid and circuitous

phrases for things, and the other objects to them. The first thing to be dealt with is a pot or pitcher :

- A. When I wish to name a pitcher, shall I simply 'pitcher' say,  
 or 'the hollow vessel moulded by the potter's flying wheel,  
 earthen, baked in earthen furnace, earth the mother,  
 earth the child'?

Then follows a similar picturesque periphrasis for the meat in the pot, and the other speaker says that this sort of thing will be the death of him—he wants only the intelligible phrase, 'a pot of meat.' The first speaker now proceeds to adumbrate the idea of a 'cake' in some four lines of pompous phraseology. Then we have a few shorter examples :

- A. Draught from Bacchic fount exuded? B. Cut it down to one word, 'wine.'  
 A. Dewy rills beloved of Naiads? B. 'Water' were a simpler term.  
 A. Araby's soft airy fragrance? B. Please say 'myrrh' and nothing more.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. πότερ' ὅταν μέλλω λέγειν σοι τὴν χύτραν, χύτραν λέγω,  
 ἢ τροχοῦ βύμαισι τευκτὸν κοίλοσώματος κύτος  
 πλαστὸν ἐκ γαίας, ἐν ἀλλῇ μητρὶς ὀπτηθὲν στέγῃ;

A. βρομάδος δ' ἰδρώτα πηγῆς; B. οἶνον εἰπὲ συντεμνών.

A. λιβάδα νυμφαίαν δροσώδη; B. παραλιπὼν ὕδωρ φάθι.

A. κασιόπουν δ' αἶθρα δι' αἶθρας; B. σμόρναν εἰπέ, μὴ μακράν.

A similar parody of poetic language occurs in an English writer who was earlier than Wordsworth. It is in Swift's *Art of Sinking in Poetry*, and what he gives us is the dithyrambic language for 'Draw the cork of the bottle, and cut the bread':

Apply the engine to the spongy door,  
Set Bacchus from his glassy prison free  
And strip white Ceres of her nutbrown coat.

I have called this dithyrambic language, because turgidity of this kind seems to have been specially frequent in a form of ancient poetry which is not very well known to us, but which Antiphanes probably had in view—the dithyramb or choric song in honour of Dionysus. Greek tragedy, it is well known, was in its origin closely associated with the dithyramb, and it is curious that among the very scanty fragments of tragedy prior to Aeschylus we find traces of this vein of language. Choerilus is said to have called rivers the 'veins of the earth' and rocks the earth's 'bones.'<sup>1</sup> Aeschylus in a well-known passage speaks of the Aegean Sea as 'blossoming' or 'aflower' with dead bodies after a storm:<sup>2</sup> and in the *Persae*, per-

<sup>1</sup> γῆς φλέβες, γῆς ὀστᾶ.

<sup>2</sup> ἀνθούσιν πέλαγος Αἰγαίου νεκρῶν.

haps with an intentional suggestion of Oriental grandiloquence, he calls fishes the 'voiceless children of the unpolluted one,' that is, of the sea.<sup>1</sup> From this point of view we may regard Greek tragedy as gradually emerging from the influence of the dithyramb and shaking itself free from the temptation to turgidity. In Euripides, apart from choric passages, the language is usually very plain and simple, and this is naturally accompanied by a change in the verse. The senarius becomes less strict and regular, admitting resolution more frequently. No doubt the change belonged to the tendencies of Euripides' time. But we must give him some credit for originality. Aristotle expressly says that he was an innovator in this respect, and first showed poets how to use quite ordinary words in an effective way.<sup>2</sup> Before taking leave of the dithyramb, we may notice a curious fact about turgid language of this type. It seems to be common to the most ambitious poetry and to the speech of the common people. Hesiod, writing for Boeotian peasants, designates a snail as 'the house-carrier, the boneless one,'

<sup>1</sup> ἄναυδοι παῖδες τῆς ἀμάρτου.

<sup>2</sup> ὑπέδειξε πρῶτος, *Rhet.* iii., p. 1404 b 25.

φερέουκος ἀνόστεος, very much as in modern slang a dried haddock becomes an 'Atlantic ranger,' or a 'Two-eyed steak.' What is the explanation of this coincidence? Is it that the common man rather likes to feel that he is cleverer than his hearer, and is giving him something to think about or decipher? and that on a higher plane and in a different way the poet is tempted to be a little oracular?<sup>1</sup>

This preliminary survey of the ground has led us rather through some bye-ways of literary history than towards a theory or explanation of the central fact. Why have poets so often spoken in a language of their own? As soon

<sup>1</sup> A good illustration of what 'dithyrambic' meant to a Greek critic is to be found in a scholion on *Od.* ix. 43:

ἐνθ' ἦτοι μὲν ἐγὼ διερῶ ποδί φευγόμεν ἡμέας  
ἠρώγεα.

διερῶ ποδί, 'wet foot,' was by some taken to mean a ship: the interpretation is rejected as διθυραμβώδες. The extant fragments of Timotheus and Philoxenus show some affinity with the passage in Antiphanes. The former in his 'Cyclops' wrote:

ἔμισγέ θ'

αἶμα βακχίου νεορρότοις δακρύοις νυμφῶν.

(=mixed the wine with water). He was a writer of Νόμοι, a form of lyric composition akin to the dithyramb. In his *Πέρσες* the language is as a rule simple, but there are some good specimens of 'dithyrambic' phrase. Oars are *ὄρειαι πῶδες ράδες*, the sea *πλῶμα πεδία*, salt water *ἀβαχχίωτος ὕμβρος*, the throat or gullet *τρόφιμον ἄγγος*.

as we have asked the question, we begin to see its difficulty, for it is nothing less than an inquiry into the nature of poetry. What is poetry that it should be justified in doing this? And if we could answer that question we should probably find that we had explained at the same time why poetry has almost universally employed metre: for metre, or regularly recurrent rhythm, is another conspicuous deviation from ordinary speech. Even if we were prepared to say that the metrical form of poetry and its peculiar language were antiquated things which poets should now reject, we should not have escaped from our problem: for we should still have to explain why they have prevailed in the past. What has been done so often, by so many poets in different ages and countries, cannot be a mere accident or eccentricity; it must have some basis or justification in the very nature of poetry. Without attempting to answer the question 'what is poetry,' we may try to grope around it and to recall some of the things which have been said about it, in the hope of finding some such justification for its outward form, and for the mechanism of expression which in most of its forms it still continues to use.

Poetry is a *μίμησις*, Aristotle says, and gives us *τὰ καθόλου*, not *τὰ καθ' ἑκάστα*, the general or universal, not the particular. How are we to understand this? The great poet, we may say, is a man of finer and more sensitive nature, of wider outlook and more subtle sympathy: he re-interprets the world for his more obtuse fellow-men: he sees aspects of things that are hid from the common-place observer, he perceives the real and vital issues, he ignores the unessential or the trivial: he ignores the small *ἑκάστα*, except in so far as they can be made the symbols or the vehicles of great emotions or great thoughts. He does not give us a photograph of the minutiae of life: he selects and re-combines small things so that they make a significant whole and suggest deeper meanings. He takes us into an ideal world, which is not less real than the trivial and actual one: rather more so, for it is not constructed fancifully out of nothing, but made up of the deeper and more vital features of our real life. People are apt to forget that the world of poetry is a different world, with a different set of conditions: they say 'nobody talks in metre: a conversation in *senarii* is unlike life, unreal and untrue.' No

doubt it is. But the poet's business is not to *repeat* experience. There would be no instructiveness in that. His business is to recast it, so that we see some of its deeper meanings, and in so doing he creates a new and ideal world. In that world why should metre be unnatural? Rather, an exalted and subtle form of language, more symmetrical and beautiful, is in keeping with such an environment and inevitable there. Why single out for criticism the metrical form of a conversation as specially unreal? We are far removed from reality in the strict and literal sense already, when the events of days, or it may be weeks and months, are presented to us in a few hours on the stage. Art is not nature, and, what is still more often forgotten, does not even aim at being mistaken for nature. Were it not so, the photograph, the phonograph, the cinematograph would be the highest forms of art, and might supersede the works of art once for all.

Our argument here leads us to consider some of the other arts, *μυθήσεις* which do not use language, but colour, or form, or sound. A battle, let us suppose, is to be delineated. No doubt the cinematograph could give us a very exact reproduction of it in one way, or rather

a reproduction of a part of it, the transient aspect which is presented to the eye alone. But the shock of onset, the strain and suspense of the conflict, the exultation of victory, could also be represented by music, and perhaps this representation would be the more effective and more stimulating of the two: but it would not be *like* the battle: it would, in a literal sense, have no resemblance to it at all: no such musical sounds or notes were heard on the actual field. Consider again how easily and how completely some side or aspect of reality can be ignored. A landscape, in the reality full of varied colour, may be presented by an etching or an engraving in black and white. In sculpture again, in modern times, we have solid form without colour. There is no sense of incompleteness: we do not want anything more—we should have to go to a waxwork exhibition to find anything which could be *mistaken for* the reality. The artist's aim is not to delude the spectator into thinking that he has the reality before him: what he does is to use some medium or material in such a way as to stimulate the spectator's feeling or imagination, and so reveal to him some of the vital features of the object,

τὰ καθόλου in Aristotle's sense: and what we can reasonably exact of him is that having chosen his material or method, he shall keep to that and not deviate suddenly into some different sort of *μίμησις*. Obviously, in different arts there is a different degree of outward and superficial resemblance to the object imitated: in music very little, in painting much more. Suppose that in the Laocoon group the snakes alone were coloured, that they appeared in the splendour of green and golden scales, while Laocoon and his sons were of plain marble: clearly the result would be incongruous and displeasing. There is one form of modern dramatic art which I am inclined to think is open to criticism on this score, the opera. Scenery, and actors appropriately dressed, belong to a certain grade of illustration or realism: is it quite in keeping with this that even when the action is rapid the only form of utterance should be song, or subtly varied cadences of song?—when, let us say, an alarm of fire has to be given or a cry of 'Stop thief!' raised. The choric parts of a Greek drama, it might be argued, have a better justification: the more realistic action is suspended for a time, and we do not trouble

ourselves to inquire whether a band of old men or maidens would in real life sing such strains in the agora or before the doors of a palace. In the opera, with singing throughout, two different grades of realism seem to be thrust upon us at the same time.

Let us now return to the question, Why is poetry metrical, and why does it use a language of its own? The answer will have to be that a rather artificial or exalted and symmetrical vein of language has been found by experience to be appropriate to this particular kind of *μίμησις*, and to the relation between this *μίμησις* and reality. *τὸ δὲ ἔμμετρον εἶναι*, Aristotle might say, *ἀπὸ τῆς πείρας ἤρמוκεν*. Aristotle does not, in fact, say that: but he says a similar thing about the selection of metres in detail: the association of a particular metre with a certain vein of poetry is the result of experience and repeated trials, the association is natural, not arbitrary. *αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις τὸ οἰκεῖον μέτρον εὑρεν*, Nature herself found out the appropriate metre in each case. Thus the energetic and stately march of the hexameter was found to be the right measure for a heroic epos, the iambic senarius was the nearest in its effect to ordinary

speech, and therefore best suited for the drama, the trochaic tetrameter had more of the movement and liveliness of the dance. Aristotle himself does not go much beyond this, but it is easy to find further instances. In the elegy or threnos the movement of the heroic measure was cut short in every second line, it flagged or sank as if in grief: the numbers

‘wane  
again and yet again  
into a dirge and die away in pain.’

It was nature too, we might proceed, that armed Archilochus with his rapier-like iambus, and Hipponax with the bludgeon or dagger of the scazon—both of these weapons of offence.<sup>1</sup> Nature again that found the loose and unhinged Ionic measure for the voluptuous strains of Anacreon, and the frenzy of Bacchic or Corybantic revellers: the dochmiac measure for the despair and mental stress at the crisis of a tragedy: and the anapaest for the tread of a chorus or the disciplined march of Spartan troops. But if there is so much natural adaptation and appropriateness in particular metres,

<sup>1</sup> ‘liber in adversos hostes stringatur iambus,  
seu celer, extremum seu trahit ille pedem.’

OVID, *Remed. Amoris*, 377-8.

it would be absurd to suppose that the general use of metre in poetry is eccentric or unnecessary, and not also dictated by αὐτὴ ἡ φύσις. Now metre is only one of several ways in which language may be adorned or raised, as it were, above the level of everyday speech: an argument which justifies any one of these will justify the others, and, coming back to historical facts, we may observe that there is 'concomitant variation.' Compare, for instance, Aeschylus and Euripides and comedy: relaxation of metrical strictness is accompanied by greater freedom and colloquialism in language. To take the simplest matter, that of vocabulary, comedy has many words and turns of expression which even Euripides would not admit in tragedy: ἐτεόν, 'really' ἀτεχνῶς, ἑναγχος 'lately,' for the tragic ἀπρίως, ἐγῶμαι, ἐγὼ οἶμαι, and so forth. In modern times the drama has, to a large extent, discarded metrical form, and it recognises few limitations in regard to vocabulary and idiom, even in tragedy. But this only means that in a certain kind of poetic μίμησις—where scenery and actors bring with them a considerable degree of realism—the old exaltation of language has been found to be unnecessary now, though it

was natural enough, and can still be used with effect. Other forms of poetry must always be metrical, and subject to restrictions in their choice of language.

What then is the restriction, in its most elementary form? It is that the language of serious poetry, though it may be simple, must not be trivial or ignoble: what is fatal is what Aristotle calls the *ταπεινὸν* or *εὐτελές*, *ἀγοραῖα ῥήματα*, words which are inseparably associated with the sordid and insignificant details of life. To explain his meaning, Aristotle constructs an illustration out of a line in the *Odyssey*, substituting for Homer's adjectives two more prosaic ones. The poet is describing the act of placing a poor or humble table and chair for a guest: Aristotle supposes the line to run:—'set down a second-rate chair and a table of small dimensions.'<sup>1</sup> I have seen a similar effect produced by using the word 'ignite' in translating from Homer: 'the Goddess ignited a bright flame about the head of Peleus' son'—for 'ignite' is a word which can hardly be dissociated from

<sup>1</sup> *δίφρον μοχθηρὸν καταθεῖς μικρὰν τε τράπεζαν. μοχθηρός* is the word which would be applied in colloquial speech to the products of defective carpentry or jerry-building.

lucifer matches and chemical experiments. Further examples of this kind of bathos may be found in the treatise of Swift to which I have already referred :

‘Should the whole frame of nature round him break,  
He unconcerned would hear the mighty *crack*.’

But examples may be found which are not fictitious. The poet who like Euripides or Wordsworth revolts against the traditional style of poetry runs a risk of failing to distinguish between the simple and the trivial. A single turn of expression which is *εὐτελής* may be disastrous to the effect of a whole stanza or poem. Wordsworth did not always escape this danger. Consider for instance the poem called ‘The Lament of Margaret’ :

‘Where art thou, my beloved son,  
Where art thou, worse to me than dead?  
Oh find me prosperous or undone,  
Or, if the grave be now thy bed,  
Why am I ignorant *of the same*,  
That I may rest, and neither blame  
Nor sorrow may attend thy name.’

In the fifth line a wrong note is struck, there is a flaw in language which distracts our attention from the force and pathos of the whole :

'of the same' belongs to legal documents, to contracts and leases, not to poetry. Now if the poet is to avoid the trivial, he must do one of two things: he must either use words which have distinctly picturesque and dignified associations, archaic or literary words; or words which are quite simple and have *no* definite associations. And a further limitation is imposed upon him by the nature of poetry: he will, as a rule, avoid abstract or scientific terms, abstract generalizations. The general truths which poetry presents to us, τὰ καθόλου, are not *abstract* truths or maxims. The poet's language must be sensuous and concrete. A simple illustration of this may be found in the vocabulary of Greek tragedy. Nouns in -σις and adjectives in -κός are more or less abstract, describing a process or tendency: ἀποστέρσις, the process of depriving or withholding, ἀποστερητικός, tending to deprive or withhold. Words of this form hardly ever occur in tragic verse. The exceptions are of the kind which are said to 'prove the rule': they are simple words for common ideas, hardly abstract at all: ναυτικός, ἱππικός, οἰκησις. When the poets could not avoid an abstract substantive they sometimes expressed it

by a plural. Thus Sophocles uses γλώσσα for 'language' and Pindar μάχαιραι for the strokes of the knife or the process of flaying (*Pyth.* iv. 242). So in Latin 'enses' means swords flashing, that is, massacre or war; 'ligones,' the strokes of a mattock or hoe, in Horace:

'ligonibus duris humum  
exhauriebat' (*Epodes*, v. 30).

'sceptra,' the repeated wielding of a sceptre, that is, sovereignty. 'Regna' and 'arma' are similar plurals. 'Tecta' perhaps is to be compared rather with the Homeric ἄρματα, a plural designating a complex object—a concrete thing, not an abstraction.

Passing from these negative considerations, we may now proceed to review and illustrate some of the chief characteristics of the language of the great poets.

(1) In the hands of a great poet, language seems to become fluid and tractable, capable of being moulded and transmuted into new shapes. In prose and ordinary speech words are like counters which have been rubbed smooth by constant use. They are like algebraic symbols, with a fixed and definite meaning. But in poetry they may take on a new meaning. A

od instance is perhaps to be found in a  
 ssage of Sophocles where συμφοραὶ βουλευμάτων  
 ems to be used in the sense of 'comparison  
 counsels' as if from συμφέρειν βουλευματα:  
 it the instance is uncertain, for critics are  
 it agreed that the word has not here the  
 ore ordinary sense of issues or results.<sup>1</sup> In  
 ose 'misfortune' is its normal meaning.  
 nother example may be found in Horace's  
 e of the word 'caducus' in 'fulmine sustulerit  
 duco.' 'Caducus' in prose would mean  
 rishable, doomed to decay: Horace seems  
 revert to the origin of the word and to  
 ink of 'cadere,' a descending thunderbolt,  
 ταιβάτης κεραυνός, or perhaps a thunderbolt  
 at readily falls or is launched by a touch.  
 anguage, we might say, reverts to an earlier  
 age, when it is plastic or in process of  
 rmation. A poetic context may lift a word  
 it of the groove in which it commonly runs.  
 1 English, for example, 'the mortal' would  
 ormally mean ὁ θνητός, but Tennyson uses it  
 the sense of τὸ θνητόν, the mortal part of

<sup>1</sup> I am disposed to think that Prof. Phillimore has solved this  
 1 problem by his recent suggestion (*Class. Rev.* Oct. 1902) that  
 μφοραὶ here means accidental results or 'flukes.'

a man, when he describes the burial of the Duke of Wellington :

‘The black earth yawns, the mortal disappears :  
Ashes to ashes, dust to dust.’

One large class of poetic expressions will lead us some little way into the domain of logic and metaphysics. If we find a poet saying ‘ferri rigor’ instead of ‘rigidum ferrum,’ what account are we to give of this? We are accustomed to think of the world about us as made up of real ‘things’ with qualities somehow inhering in them. But if we look closely into the matter, the distinction between things and qualities seems to disappear: it is not ultimate. ‘Yellow’ is merely a symbol by which we distinguish and recall or recognise a certain perception or experience: but ‘gold’ is just the same sort of term, only with a rather more complex content, a group of two or three qualities and not merely one quality. Words from this point of view may be regarded merely as devices for grouping or arranging our experience: and the poet, to use the Platonic metaphor of κατ’ ἀρθρα τέμνειν, does not always find the same joints or divisions as other people: what is to them

a mere quality in a supposed 'thing' may be to him the central or more vividly conceived entity, of which the 'thing' is a particular and transitory manifestation. Be this as it may, it is at least certain that what would be an adjective in prose is often and very effectively a substantive in poetry. 'Ferri rigor,' 'auri splendor,' and a still more imaginative phrase in Lucretius, 'glacies aeris,'<sup>1</sup> the ice or icy hardness of bronze.

'Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,  
Over the *splendour and speed* of thy feet.'

'Pedibusque rotarum subiciunt lapsus,' they put gliding wheels under the horse's feet. 'Rotarum lapsus' may perhaps be illustrated in English by the help of a phrase in Hood's 'Letter from a Young Lady in Lincolnshire': 'the country is flat, but the windmills lend revolving animation to the scene.' This phrase is of course rather ludicrous, at all events in English: but 'the revolving animation of a windmill' is the *kind* of expression by which

<sup>1</sup> 'Argenti pondus plumbique potestas,' Lucr. v. 1242. 'Potestas' here seems to stand for the collective qualities of a metal, its substance or essence, just as 'pondus' or 'rigor' designates one of them.

that piece of mechanism might be described in, let us say, Greek tragic verse. τροχῶν βάσεις is a tragic phrase answering to 'lapsus rotarum.' This poetic idiom by which some salient feature or quality of a thing is emphasised is not limited to the description of nature and natural objects. It is frequently used in the case of persons. Homer's μένος 'Ἀλκινόοιο and Horace's 'mitis sapientia Laeli' are well-known instances. A pleasing example has been preserved from Ennius' description of an interview between Numa and Egeria,

'olli respondit suavis sonus Egeriāi'<sup>1</sup>

and the idiom is perhaps specially suited to express what is supernatural or mysterious. So in Sophocles there is the apparition of the bull-shaped river, ὑψικέρω τετραόρου φάσμα ταύρου, and similarly in Virgil, 'monstra ferarum,' strange shapes of wild beasts. But the poets have no monopoly in this mode of expression. It belongs also to Latin prose, and is not infrequent in picturesque or descriptive passages. 'Lofty

<sup>1</sup> Ὀρφέους ἐν σανίῳ, τὰς

Ὀρφεία κατέγραψεν

γῆρυς.

EUR. Alc. 967.

Here 'the voice of Orpheus' clearly means 'sweet-voiced Orpheus.'

mountains and old shady forests' would be, for example, 'montium altitudines, veteres umbrae<sup>1</sup> silvarum,' and Cicero even has the phrase 'fontium gelidae perennitates' for cool, ever-flowing springs. Cicero moreover has the idiom in the case of persons, 'illa virtus, illa humanitas L. Crassi morte extincta subita est,' with which may be compared Juvenal's 'Crispi iucunda senectus,' and his phrase for old Alban wine, 'Albani veteris pretiosa senectus,' or the 'spatium admirabile rhombi' of the Fourth Satire.

From this idiom I pass to another which is concerned with adjectives. In ordinary speech when we apply an adjective to a thing we mean that the thing has the quality in a kind of passive way; if we call a thing blue, we mean that it looks blue or has been painted blue. But in the poets an adjective is sometimes used in an active sense. The thing does not so much possess the quality itself as impart it to others. Thus in the phrase 'rigidum permanat frigus ad ossa,' 'rigidum' is rather 'stiffening' than 'stiff.' So 'forgetful' may mean causing forgetfulness

'The sleepy drench of that forgetful lake,'

and so in Tennyson 'the sound of that forgetful

<sup>1</sup> So Tennyson, 'thridding the sombre boskage of the wood.'

shore' (*In Memor.* xxxv. 14), and in a lesser poet, Silius, of the stream of Lethe,

‘*immemori* perstringens gurgite ripas’  
(*Punica*, xvi. 477).

It is a species of ‘Metonymy,’ ‘ab eo quod fit id quod facit.’ Many examples have been found in Horace, though some of them are perhaps uncertain, admitting of a different interpretation: ‘*insigni camena*’ (ennobling, glorifying): ‘*pallida mors*’: ‘*aspera | nigris aequora ventis*’ (causing blackness, ruffling the sea into dark waves): ‘*molli mero*’ (soothing, tranquillising).<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the best instance in English is Milton’s ‘swart star,’

‘gushy brooks  
upon whose lap the swart star sparely looks’  
(*Lycidas*)

where the Dog Star is meant, that scorches or blackens the fields, Horace’s ‘*torrentia agros sidera*.’

<sup>1</sup> There is a curious instance in the *Silvae* of Statius:

‘*tenet haec marcentia fratris  
pocula,*’

one hand (of a statue of Hercules) holds the cup of his brother Bacchus. ‘*Marcere*,’ ‘*marcidus*’ are words which describe the effects of wine-drinking. The adjective is used by Statius in a passage of the 12th book,

‘*mollia laudabat iam marcidus orgia Ganges.*’

It would of course be an easy matter to make out a long list of the figures of speech which poets have used effectively: aposiopesis, climax, personification and the rest. But these are common to poetry and oratory: they belong to any kind of impassioned or ornate speech. We are concerned with what is peculiar to poetry, and at present, in particular, with the ways in which a poet seems sometimes to fuse or recast language. Consider one more example of this before we pass to another subject. The example is a thing which perhaps belongs rather specially to Virgil: it consists in making some modification in a common or current phrase, so that it acquires a new significance. 'Sponte sua' is a well-known phrase, one of the fixed counters or symbols of prose speech, which an orator or a historian would have to accept as it stands. Virgil speaking of a storm turns it into 'forte sua,'

'forte sua Libycis tempestas adtulit oris,'

'at its own wild will.' 'Dare fatis vela' is a similar variation, with an obvious and effective meaning for the common 'dare ventis vela.' 'Dare classibus austros' is an inversion of which

the drift is perhaps rather more obscure: the fleet seems to be thought of as clamouring to be let loose.

(2) The language of great poetry has almost always been rich in metaphor or imagery. Metaphor, it may be objected, is common to poetry and oratory, and is therefore outside our inquiry. But the poet is not metaphorical in the same way as the orator. The manner is different. In poetry metaphors are bolder and more subtle, and the transition from one to another is often more rapid. They are often introduced too by turns of language which an orator could hardly venture to use. 'Illam incendentem luctus,' 'kindling a blaze of grief' *παιὰν δὲ λάμπει*—'shines' standing for 'rings loud.' Or the gods are said to have 'rocked the city on wild waves,' *πολλῶ σάλαρ σείσαντες*, where the verb seems to suggest a second metaphor of earthquake (*σεισμός*). Mixture of metaphors is not so reprehensible in poetry as in oratory. The orator addresses himself to ordinary minds, and that under less favourable conditions: he must aim at broad, rough-hewn effects, and he errs if he starts with the metaphor of a storm and ends his sentence

with a fire or the collapse of a building.<sup>1</sup>

‘Hoc *fonte derivata* clades  
in patriam populumque *fluxit*’—

Horace's metaphor, in its neatness and consistency and its manner generally, is not specially poetical: it is rather a passage which should be kept in mind by a writer of Latin prose, who has to speak of causes and effects.

To review the varieties of poetic metaphor would be an endless task. Two remarks about it must suffice: one is a reservation, the other is historical. The reservation is that though it is true, as Aristotle says, that it is of the first importance that the poet be *μεταφορικός* or have a command of metaphor, he is not to be thought of as always or of necessity speaking in figurative language. Many of Virgil's greatest lines are extremely simple, and either not metaphorical at all or not in any way dependent upon metaphor for their effect.

‘aude, hospes, contemnere opes et te quoque dignum  
finge deo.’

The historical remark is that the poet's imagery

<sup>1</sup> Quint. VIII. vi. 50: ‘Multi autem, cum initium a tempestate sumpserunt, incendio aut ruina finiunt: quae est inconsequentia rerum foedissima.’

at first takes the more deliberate and explicit form of a simile. Homer paints a picture and then calls his hearer's attention to the resemblance. 'Even as snow-flakes fall thick on a day of winter'—and the snowstorm is fully and vividly described in several lines—'so flew the darts and arrows between the opposing hosts.' It is only later, as in Sophocles, that poetic language comes to be penetrated or saturated with metaphor. The hearer is now more acute and receptive: the image or figure is introduced boldly and without apology, sometimes in a single word such as *οἰακοστροφεῖν*, to 'wield the helm' for 'to guide' or 'direct.' Even in Homer, however, there are some metaphors: a few forms of imagery have become sufficiently familiar to need no elaboration or explanation. Battle 'blazes' or 'is ablaze,' *δέδην, μάχη καύσσειρα*; Destiny 'fetters' her victim, *ἐπέδησε*; a man is *ῥυδὸν ἀφνειός*,—as Chaucer says, 'It snewed in his house of meat and drink': a war is wound to the end like a ball or clew of wool, *πόλεμον πολυπεύειν*: the blood 'shot' up in a jet from the wound, *αἷμα δ' ἀνηκόντιζε*. But these are exceptions in Homer. The simile is much more frequent.

(3) We have seen that the poet, debarred from trivial words, must use either words which are extremely simple or words which have distinctly picturesque or impressive associations. We must now resume the latter idea, and consider how a poet uses words which have already acquired some poetical value. Some poets have used such words more than others: none, perhaps, so often or so successfully as Virgil. We might say of him in Aristotle's language *δεδίδαχε τοὺς ἄλλους εἰρημένα λέγειν ὥς δεῖ*. Virgil's skill in awaking the echoes of the past by a word or phrase has often been discussed and illustrated. A few remarks about it must suffice here. Very often it was the language of Ennius, of the early national epic of Rome, that he revived or recalled, but many other poets are laid under contribution. One of the most striking instances of allusive art or the art of reminiscence is in a passage of the *Georgics* on the triumphs of philosophy. 'Happy is he who knows the causes of things and has trampled under foot the fear of death,'

'strepitumque Acherontis avari.'

Virgil does not name Lucretius, but Lucretius

had spoken of the 'metus Acheruntis,' and the allusion to him seems unmistakable.<sup>1</sup> In modern English poetry there is no better illustration of the Virgilian method than a word in Tennyson's lines addressed to Virgil: 'I salute thee, Mantovano,' where the Italian adjective recalls the intervening poem of Dante and the discipleship of Dante to the poet of Mantua. Some of Virgil's echoes or reminiscences, it must be admitted, are less happy than others. Once or twice Virgil uses in a serious context words which in an earlier poet had been comic or less dignified. Thus the opening scene of *Aen.* x. was modelled on a council of the gods in Lucilius, where the debate was about the fate of a corrupt judge, Lupus. There is a similar case in Tennyson:

'And of his ashes shall be made  
The violet of his native land.'

This is a reminiscence of Persius:

'nunc non e tumulo fortunataque favilla  
nascentur violae?'

but the passage in Persius is sarcastic, dealing

<sup>1</sup>The Augustan poets seem to be reluctant to name the materialistic Lucretius. Horace does not name him either, but uses his words ('deos didici securum agere aevum,' *Sat.* l. v.).

with the triumphs of the fashionable poet. If a theory recently propounded<sup>1</sup> is true, Virgil borrowed rather extensively from his friend Cornelius Gallus, and sometimes used rather infelicitously what he borrowed. For example, in the sixth book of the *Aeneid*, the Sibyl suddenly shows the golden bough to Charon :

‘at ramum hunc—aperit ramum, qui veste latebat—  
agnoscas.’

In the *Ciris*, which according to this theory is the work of Cornelius Gallus, we find the line :

‘aut ferro hoc—aperit ferrum quod veste latebat’—

Now, in the *Aeneid* it is not very clear why the Sibyl should conceal the bough : but in the *Ciris* there is nothing obscure or unnatural ; Scylla, the heroine, has been contemplating suicide, and she lets an aged attendant and confidante see her concealed dagger.

The use of allusive or traditional language was perhaps thrust upon the Roman poets by the conditions under which they worked. The Latin language was not naturally suited for poetry in the same way as the Greek. It had

<sup>1</sup> By Skutsch, in *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*, Leipzig, 1901.

great qualities or possibilities—it could be stately, lucid, and forcible—but it had not a similar wealth of graceful and picturesque words; its resources were more limited, it was comparatively stern, narrow, and hard. The poet has to do what he can with rather simple materials, and has to take what help he can get from a predecessor; for instance, Virgil could the more easily make the adjective ‘mirus’ convey some sense of the ghostly or supernatural, because Lucretius had used it in a similar context before him: ‘ora’ or ‘simulacra,’ ‘modis pallentia miris’

We have now surveyed some of the ways in which the language of poetry differs from that of prose, and the last remark has brought us back to history and to a comparison of languages. But if we are to compare languages, we must revert also to the simple question of vocabulary, for the modes of *using* words in poetry have varied greatly in different poets and different ages. To what extent do we find two words for the same thing, a prosaic and a poetical word, like ‘horse’ and ‘steed,’ ‘Pferd’ and ‘Ross,’ ‘equus’ and ‘sonipes’? How does the matter stand in the case of the Greek and Latin languages?

There is one very conspicuous difference between Greek and Roman literature. In Greece, literary works were produced in several different dialects: in Italy no dialect save Latin ever attained to any literary importance at all—the last possibility of that disappeared with the close of the Social War in 88 B.C. A Greek writer had therefore an immense advantage in command of words: he had more sources to draw upon: he played upon an instrument of greater range and more subtle tone. And this was especially the case in poetry, for in prose Attic soon became normal and dominant. One consequence of this is that not only do we find different words used in prose and poetry, but each kind of poetry has in some degree a language of its own. There are epic words and tragic words, both distinct from the corresponding prose words. Thus *πάγχυ* and *πάμπαν* are epic: *κάρτυ* is tragic: *σφόδρα* and *πάνυ* belong to prose and comedy. So again *ἄκοιτις* or *πυρρίκοιτις* is epic: *δάμαρ* tragic: *γυνή* belongs to prose—*γυνή* is the simple and colourless word, regular in prose, but capable of being used in verse also. It is the language of tragedy that presents the most interesting

problem from our present point of view. How did the tragic poet come to possess the words *φάσγανον* and *κάρα*, when the prose-writer had only *ξίφος* and *κεφαλή*? Two distinct theories have been advanced. One is that the language of tragedy is a survival from the sixth century, the time when tragedy arose: it is in fact old Attic. The other theory traces the peculiarities of tragic speech to a literary source. They came from the great literature of Ionia, from Archilochus and Herodotus. That literature was well known at Athens, and the Ionians were kinsmen. What words could be better suited to the purpose of the tragic poet than such as would readily be understood by his hearers but which yet were not degraded by constant use on trivial occasions? On the other hand, there are arguments of some force *against* the theory of survival. It involves the supposition that a vast change in the vocabulary of the Athenians took place in a century or less. And we have as it happens at least one inscription from the sixth century to show that Attic and Ionic were *not* identical in vocabulary at that time: this is an inscription from Sigeum, drawn up in parallel columns, one in Attic, one

in Ionic. The same thing—a stand for a cup—is called ἐπίστατον in one and ὑποκρητήριον in the other.

In turning to Latin, we must not expect to find anything so elaborate and so highly differentiated and developed as the poetic language of Greece. The early history of Roman poetry is largely the history of a struggle with a refractory language. At first the Romans tried to run their language into the moulds which Greek poetry supplied, representing for example *δια θεῶν* by 'dia dearum,' and assuming that what Homer did they might do. If a Greek line may end in *ὑπερηνορεύων*, a word of seven syllables, why should not a Latin one end in 'sapientipotentēs'? 'Sapientipotentēs' also illustrates the boldness of the early poet in forming new words. Prolonged experiment showed that the Latin language imposed new and different conditions upon the poet. The achievement of success in the poetic art—in the first century before Christ—brought with it the abandonment of these erratic flights. The bolder policy of the early poets, however, provided their successors with a good deal of useful material. If they made many cumbrous

compounds which could be of little further service, like 'sapientipotentes' or 'incurvicervicus,' they also made some neat and effective ones: and Ennius sometimes struck out a phrase to which Virgil could extend a welcome, for its moral 'gravitas' or weighty rhythm or ancient associations: 'cum populo patribusque penatibus et magnis dis.'

The Romans were very critical about their own language, and spent much study upon it. So we are not surprised to find that Quintilian has a very definite account to give of the language of poetry. Cicero had touched upon the subject before him. Quintilian points out that some picturesque and poetic terms may find a place in prose, while others may not. We may say in prose 'mucro' for 'gladius,' and 'tectum' for 'domus'; but not 'puppis' in the sense of 'navis,' or 'abies' in the sense of 'tabellae';<sup>1</sup> 'ferrum' for 'gladius,' but not 'quadrupes' for 'equus' (*Inst. Or.* VIII. vi. 20). In another passage he says that 'reor' may pass, but 'autumo' is tragic, and 'proles' belongs to verse (*Inst. Or.* VIII. iii. 26). Cicero does not altogether exclude 'proles'

<sup>1</sup> Plautus, *Persa*, 248: 'obsignatam abietem fero.'

in prose: that word and 'suboles' and 'fari' and 'nuncupo' he would be prepared to use if occasion served (*De Oratore*, III. 153). It is easy to add a few further observations on the lines laid down by Quintilian, and with these our inquiry into poetic language must close. Latin has not a great many words which are restricted to poetry altogether, words which never, or practically never, occur in prose. 'insis' and 'inclutus' seem to be examples. 'suppis,' 'carina,' and 'ratis' are exclusively poetic in the sense of ship; in their special senses of 'poop,' 'keel,' and 'raft' they are missible in prose. 'Fari' is distinctly poetic, and so are most parts of the verb 'fari,' though the participle 'fatus' is quite frequent in history. Besides 'quadrupes' as a distinctly poetic term for 'horse,' there is also, as we have seen, the all more picturesque or highly coloured 'sonis,' which is almost *διθυραμβῶδες* in character and recalls Hesiod's snail. In most languages, it would seem, there are very various grades of poetic quality in words, and a complete scale might be constructed. The frequency with which a word could successfully be used in prose would be a rough test. At one end of

the scale would stand words which are incurably prosaic, and which could never find a place in serious verse: at the other, words like 'sonipes' or ἀμαιμάκετος, for which even the most imaginative and venturesome of prose writers could never find an appropriate setting.



## VII.

### THE METRICAL FORM OF POETRY.

IN a well-known passage of the *Poetics*, Aristotle says that poetry arises from two causes or sources, both of them inherent in human nature. One is the instinct of imitation or mimicry, and the pleasure which men feel in beholding or hearing what is thus produced—this, we should probably understand, is the first cause, stated in a double aspect, as an instinct in the imitator and an answering instinct in his fellows. The second—or the third, added as an afterthought, but this seems less likely—is the instinct for *ἁρμονία* and *ῥυθμός*, for tune and for time or rhythm. Certainly it seems to belong to human nature and to be a primitive tendency that at certain seasons utterance should be in some way raised above the ordinary level of talk, should be

stately and regular and recurrent. Aristotle closely connects the rise of various forms of poetry with religious celebrations. The gods or the spirits of the mighty dead may not be addressed in casual or unregulated words—hence the *ὑμνοὶ* and *ἐγκώμια* which preceded the heroic epos. Thus there came into use a ‘carmen’: not perhaps necessarily metrical or what we should now call metrical, but utterance cut into ‘lengths’ or sections: ‘carmen’ is perhaps to be traced to a verb, ‘carēre,’ to ‘divide,’ which appears in ‘caro,’ a portion of flesh, and in ‘cardo,’ the dividing line between door and wall. In a phrase like ‘lex horrendi carminis’ the word means rather a solemn phrase or formula than a verse. But the mere feeling that certain utterances must be solemn or impressive will not carry us very far. We should have to point also to a more general sense for form and symmetry, such a sense as is manifested in architecture: partly, as Aristotle might say, an intellectual interest in constructing or understanding a complex and skilfully planned fabric. And to account for the poetry of later ages, we should have to touch upon more subtle questions of psychology, and perhaps

venture upon the paradox that it is just the artificiality of metrical form that makes verse a suitable vehicle for the most intense and fervid emotions. Most Englishmen are more or less reticent and reserved: but even among more effusive peoples the finer spirits at least are by no means wholly unreserved or ready to 'wear the heart upon the sleeve.' And it may well be that the writer of verse has a sense of security, if he should meet with an unsympathetic hearer, in being able to say: 'I do not give you this as a crude and literal transcript of *my* feelings: you may look upon it as an exercise in metrical form, or at all events as the delineation of the feelings of an ideal person, with whom perhaps I identify myself more or less—but how closely is no business of yours.' This would be very much what Aristotle means when he says that poetry is concerned with τὰ καθόλου. In his introduction to *In Memoriam* Mr. A. C. Bradley draws an instructive distinction between 'the poet' and the individual person, Alfred Tennyson: evidence as to the way in which *In Memoriam* was written, and the times at which various parts were composed, seems to show that it was by

no means a literal and immediate transcript of feelings as they arose.<sup>1</sup> Obviously many of the odes of Horace may be looked at in the same light: whether the experiences of 'the poet' were exactly those of the person Q. Horatius Flaccus we can never know, and need not greatly care. But this line of thought may lead us astray if we pursue it too far. We may come to think of the poem as something fictitious and artificial, constructed by an intellectual effort when all real feeling has ceased. To take this view would be to lay too much stress on one part of a well-known definition, 'Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity.' It is not merely 'recollected,' if we mean by recollection a purely intellectual process. The fire is kindled again. But the emotion is so far tranquillised that it can be accompanied by what is intellectual, by constructive effort and attention to grace of form. The poet is in a sense outside his emotion, he is treating it as a subject for art: but it is not an unreal emotion for all that.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bradley quotes Tennyson's own words: 'This is a poem, *not* an actual biography. . . . 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him.'

The aim of these preliminary remarks is not to explain anything so subtle as poetic composition—perhaps even the poet himself could not adequately do that—but to make it clear that however mechanically we may have to deal with metrical form we are not thereby reducing poetry itself to something artificial or mechanical: and perhaps we may be confirmed in our general view by observing that the poetry which expresses the strongest feeling is by no means as a rule the simplest in point of metre. A Sapphic or Alcaic stanza has a more complex structure than hexameters or blank verse.

Even the theory of metre is not necessarily mechanical: Greek theories on the subject were sometimes of a more or less Platonic cast. In the whole universe, according to Plato, a kind of rhythm or order is impressed upon refractory matter by divine reason. 'Metre,' says Longinus in his *Prolegomena* to *Hephaestion*, 'is the offspring of rhythm and of God,' μέτρον δὲ πατήρ ῥυθμός καὶ θεός: and we should be following closely in the track of Greek thought if we imagined Apollo saying to the poet, 'The universe is a kind of poem with a divine

rhythm in it: but that rhythm is so subtle and complex that only I who am the *προφήτης* of Zeus could follow it: if you are to sing to your fellow-men, you must simplify the rhythm: in the stories that you tell the meaning must be plainer and more on the surface than it is in real events, and the utterance must have a regular and obvious cadence.' Having so spoken, the god explained to the poet the nature of the two primary metres, *μέτρα πρωτότυπα*, from which all the others could be derived—so at least the *μῦθος* would run if certain ancient theorists constructed it. This theory of the derivation of metres is neither historical nor inspired, but through Varro it probably had some influence on the metrical practice of Roman poets.

If we are in search of a theory of metre, it is not open to us at the present day to go back to a revelation made by Apollo. We must, in fact, begin with some very simple and more or less mathematical conceptions and considerations, and obvious and elementary as they are, I think it is important to review them, because they might be taught with advantage, but as far as I know are seldom or never taught, at

at quite early stage in classical education: as soon, perhaps, as verse is read at all. Usually, as far as I have observed, a great deal is left unexplained. The questions which an active-minded boy might well ask are neither suggested to boys nor answered. *Why* does a hexameter end in a dactyl and spondee? *Why* are spondees admitted in iambic and trochaic verse? And, this explained, *why* do they come in alternate places, in the first, third, and fifth feet of a senarius, but not in the other feet? I propose in this paper to touch upon this question first—how should the elements of metre be presented or explained: then to take up what belongs to a more advanced stage in a literary training, the question why certain metrical forms are specially associated with certain subjects or emotions or trains of thought: and, thirdly, to adumbrate a sort of introduction to the study of Roman metre—to consider the question how and why the Roman poets modified in various ways the metres which they adopted from the Greeks. This last subject affords, I think, some instructive illustrations of principles which will have been previously explained.

## I. SCIENTIAE METRICAE RUDIMENTA.

Our supposed exposition would have to begin with the discrimination of *ῥυθμική* and *μετρική*, the science of rhythm and the science of metre; or at all events the teacher would have to be clear about that in his own mind if he is to be able to explain the elements of metre clearly. And the distinction must be drawn as the Greeks drew it. *ῥυθμική* is the more general and abstract science, dealing with a series of intervals or *χρόνοι*, time-spaces or whatever they should be called, empty moulds as it were which may be filled or made perceptible by any kind of sound or movement. The material which fills them, which falls into rhythmical shape or is subjected to rhythm (*τὸ ῥυθμιζόμενον*) may be musical notes, or words sung or spoken, or gestures and movements of the body (*σχήματα*, which form the *ῥυθμιζόμενοι* in the case of *ὄρχησις*). An elementary and continuous form of this last kind of rhythm is to be found in the swing of the blacksmith's hammer :

'illi inter sese magna vi brachia tollunt  
in numerum versantque tenaci forcipe massam.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ἔστι γὰρ ὁ ῥυθμὸς ἐκτελούμενος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐν χειρὶ σφαιρῶν.  
*Proleg. ad Hephaestionis Enchir.* 3.

Here, too, there is an upward and a downward movement, an *ἄρσις* and a *θέσις*—terms which, as the Greeks used them, were applied to the foot of a dancer, but which in Roman times (after a transition period in which they were misused in a different way) were inverted by being transferred to the voice. In a rhythmic bar or foot there must be an ictus (or stroke on the anvil) to give it character and structure: and the part on which this falls is not necessarily equal to the other, though in one of the most common rhythms, the dactylic or anapaestic (specially associated with a solemn march) the ratio is equality. Bars or feet are made up of certain units of time, and the primary unit or *χρόνος πρῶτος* may be designated by the symbol which is in common use for a short syllable,  $\cup$ . In the Greek theory—which is really a final and exact account of the matter—there were three main types of rhythm, consisting of three, four and five *χρόνοι* respectively,  $\cup\cup\cup$ ,  $\cup\cup\cup\cup$ , and  $\cup\cup\cup\cup\cup$ : and the ratio between the parts of a bar was 2:1 ( $\cup\cup|\cup$  trochaic,  $\cup|\cup\cup$  iambic), 2:2 ( $\cup\cup|\cup\cup$ ), and 3:2 ( $\cup\cup\cup|\cup\cup$ , Cretic and Paeonic feet). The incidence of the *ictus* was as follows: trochaic

˘˘˘, iambic ˘˘˘, dactylic ˘˘ ˘˘, anapaestic ˘˘ ˘˘, Cretic ˘˘˘ ˘˘, and usually, to make the effect of the ictus more obvious and the structure of the bar clearer, the syllable that bore the ictus was combined with the following syllable into one long syllable: trochee ˘˘, iambus ˘˘˘: dactyl ˘˘˘, anapaest ˘˘˘˘: Cretic foot ˘˘˘˘.

Now in this last sentence, in speaking of 'syllables,' and in distinguishing trochee from iambus and dactyl from anapaest, we have crossed the boundary which separates *ῥυθμική* from *μετρική*. Dactyl and anapaest are the same *rhythm*: 'for rhythm, it is of no moment whether the two short syllables come first or last.'<sup>1</sup> Metre is the application of rhythm to language or articulate speech: one kind or species of metre is dactylic, another and cognate kind is anapaestic: and, within such a species, a hexameter is one metre, a tetrameter is another—metres, in other words, are 'lengths' or 'sections' of rhythm, beginning in a certain way, either with *ἀρσις* or *θέσις*, and of a fixed length. For such 'sections' Aristotle uses the

<sup>1</sup> Quint. ix. iv. 48: *rhythmo indifferens est, dactylusne ille priores habeat breves an sequentes.*

word *τμητά* in the *Rhetoric*, and it is probably in the same sense that he calls metres *μόρια τῶν ῥυθμῶν* in the *Poetics* (C. iv.): Aristides speaks of *τομὴ ῥυθμοῦ*. It was not the only theory current in antiquity regarding the relations of rhythm and metre, but it seems to be the most intelligible and useful view.

It now becomes possible to deal with the various questions of the intelligent schoolboy. Why does a hexameter end normally in a dactyl and spondee? We start with a dactylic rhythm going on indefinitely, *εἰς ἄπειρον*:

— — — | — — — | — — — | — — — .....

and this is to be cut into lengths of six. How is each group of six to be marked out and signalised as a separate whole? An obvious device is to make the sixth foot different from the other five—its two last syllables are combined into one and it becomes a spondee.<sup>1</sup> But if we made the fifth foot a spondee also, our device would be frustrated and would lose its effect—

<sup>1</sup> It may be what *for Prosody* is a trochee, — —. Prosody is a further step in the direction which we took in passing from rhythm to metre. For metre and rhythm the last syllable of a group is *anceps*, *ἀδιάφορος*—a short syllable may serve as a long, for the time can be made up by a pause.

the preceding foot must be the normal or fundamental one, a dactyl. Sometimes, it is true, the poets make a line end in two spondees : in that case the *fourth* foot is usually a dactyl, and the effect is that of a larger and heavier ending, four long syllables instead of two. Such a line, the *σπονδειαῖζων*, was affected by Alexandrian poets and by their admirers at Rome :

‘quis angusta malis cum moenia vexarentur’—

The effect was too heavy for frequent use. Its popularity was perhaps due in part to an accidental or extraneous cause. The Homeric poems contained many endings like *ἦοα δῖαν, Ἀγροῖος υἱός, Ἀτρεΐδαν*. In the course of time the language of Homer was in some degree atticised or modernised and lines like these became *σπονδειαῖζοντες*. ‘Spondee,’ it should be added, is a term which is not quite accurately applied to the foot of two long syllables which occurs in dactylic verse—that foot is merely a form of the dactyl. The genuine spondee was associated with religious ceremonies and libations, *σπονδαί*, and was sometimes if not always much slower in its movement: it was — —, not — —, it had the time of four long syllables, not of two.

The next question that awaits us is the occurrence of 'spondees' in iambic and trochaic verse. We have now to deal with 'sections' of a different rhythm, a rhythm *ἐν διπλασίῳ λόγῳ*, in which the ratio of the parts of a foot is 2:1. How is the group or section to be made manifest as one whole? Again by making the last foot or bar different from the others, and, this time, by allowing it to be a little heavier: by making it what, for Prosody, is a spondee. Thus a trochaic tetrapody would be — — — — —. Clearly we cannot allow this variation in the first foot; for if it were admitted, the series would begin with three long syllables — — —, and it would have no obvious rhythmical structure at all. But what is the smallest group? Plainly a dipody or group of two feet, — — —, and here we have a metrical element of great importance and of very wide application. A trochee or iambus, shorter and made of unequal parts, had not the same equilibrium and independence as a dactyl. Two trochees or iambs were the metrical unit: whence the names 'trimeter' and 'tetrameter' for lines of six and eight feet respectively. The Romans did not apprehend this so clearly, and called them 'senarii' and

'octonarii.' If trochees were taken singly, *κατὰ μονοποδίαν*, the effect would be one of mincing, tripping little steps. A trochaic line is really made up of dipodies; and hence in every fourth place a long syllable is admitted:

— — — — — | — — — — — || — — — — — | — — — — — ^

This is the most common form of trochaic tetrameter, which in the Greek poets is usually 'catalectic,' that is to say, the last foot is not complete in sound or syllables, but is completed by a short pause or rest denoted by ^ (the initial letter of *λείμμα*, pause). The Greek poets gave unity to the whole line by making the last foot of all conspicuously different from the rest, by 'catalexis.' The Roman dramatic poets, less sensitive to artistic structure, frequently write non-catalectic 'octonarii.' The 'spondee' is again not a real spondee—still less so than the spondee in dactylic hexameters. There is some evidence to show that the Greeks regarded it not as 2:2 but as 2:1½; it was *μεταξὺ δυοῖν λόγων γνωρίμου*—neither 2:2 nor 2:1, but between them.

A very little reflection and experiment will show that in iambic verse the rule must be the converse of that which is laid down for trochaic.

In the latter, the pure or normal foot must come first, — — — —, not — — — —. If the structure of iambic verse is to be made obvious to the reader or hearer, the beginning must be — — — —, and not — — — —.

Much of this discussion is very simple. The whole of it is probably quite familiar to most classical teachers, but they do not take the trouble to put it simply, or it does not occur to them that it need be set forth at all. Most of it could surely be made plain to quite junior schoolboys with the help of a blackboard; and I do not see why it should not interest them as much as many things which they learn at present. If an interest in metre could be excited at an early stage, something would be done towards abolishing the irrational, unscientific, and inartistic practice of reading verse as if it were prose, without any thought of its metrical effect. I believe that this would be an important improvement in classical education. It would have to be accompanied by strict attention to quantity—by which I do not mean insisting that a boy shall be able to say *whether* a syllable is long or short, but that he should pronounce it from the first with its proper

quantity, and should never hear it mispronounced by his teacher. A syllable is long *or* short, not either or both,<sup>1</sup> and it is as easy to acquire by ear the right pronunciation as the wrong one. It is a perpetual mystery to me how teachers contrive to leave their pupils in so much doubt about quantities. The knowledge of quantity possessed by many entrants at the Universities—this applies to Scotland more strongly than to England—is such as to suggest that they have never heard a Latin or Greek word pronounced at all—they have merely seen the words on paper, and if marks of quantity were appended they have ignored them as meaningless.

This is a paedagogic digression. I return to the trochaic dipody and to an aspect of it which does not belong to so early a stage in classical study—which is in fact rather a speculation than an axiom or a fact, a possible way of effecting a transition from trochees to another important class of metres, the Ionic.

<sup>1</sup>Of course there are certain syllables which, though normally short, are sometimes long in certain elaborate forms of serious poetry—short vowels before a mute and a liquid. But this is an exception easily explained. *διάρπτεται* has no place in Aristophanes. 'Tenēbrae,' 'pātrēm' were unknown to comedy and ordinary speech—they belonged to the strict, hellenising poets.

An ordinary trochaic dipody presumably has a slightly stronger ictus on the first trochee than on the second  $\dot{\text{—}}\text{—} \dot{\text{—}}\text{—}$ . But what if we exaggerate this ictus or displace it? Let us suppose that it may be very strong and may fall on the second trochee:

$\text{—}\text{—} \text{—} \text{—}$

And now read a piece of trochaic verse with this ictus:

ὠφελὲν σ', ὦ τυφλὲ Πλούτε,  
μήτε γῇ μήτ' ἐν θαλάσῃ  
μήτ' ἐν ἡπείρῳ φανῆναι,  
ἀλλὰ Τάρταρόν τε ναίειν  
κάχέροντα· διὰ σὲ γὰρ πάντ'  
ἔστ' ἐν ἀνθρώποις κακά.

If we put a very strong ictus on the first syllable of Πλούτε,  $\dot{\text{—}}\text{—}\dot{\text{—}}\text{—}$  Πλούτε is not very different in effect from  $\dot{\text{—}}\text{—}\dot{\text{—}}\text{—}$  Πλούτε (which is possible in prosody, for the  $\nu$  is short by nature). Thus  $\text{—}\text{—}\text{—}\text{—}$  comes into view as a substitute for  $\text{—}\text{—}\text{—}\text{—}$ : and similarly for  $\text{—}\text{—}\text{—} \text{—}$  we might have  $\text{—}\text{—}\text{—}$  without any serious change in the rhythmical effect. But if this be admitted, we have arrived at one of the commonest and most effective forms of Ionic verse, 'Ιωνικοὶ ἀνακλώμενοι, a *minori*.  $\text{—}\text{—}\text{—} | \text{—}\text{—}\text{—}$  is the

metre of Anacreon's *συμποτικά*, and it is also the first part of each line in Catullus' *Attis*, for it was associated with Cybele as well as with Dionysus: 'super alta vectus Attis.' I do not put this forward as a historical theory. It is perhaps no more historical than Varro's *μέτρα πρωτότυπα*. But I do recommend it as a method of realising what the effect of *Ἴωνικοὶ ἀνακλόμενοι* was. We have made the transition by wrecking the equilibrium of a trochaic dipody—by throwing an excessive weight into one scale. Plato in the *Republic* speaks of *βάσεις*, which belong to recklessness, or frenzy<sup>1</sup>: he does not say what measures he has in view: but it is not difficult to conjecture that Ionic measures would come under this condemnation. They are associated with revelry and religious or fanatic *ἔκστασις*. Ionic is the prevailing rhythm in the lyrics of the *Bacchae*. They have no place under the Spartan regime of Plato's ideal state. Anacreon had brought them to Athens in the time of the Pisis-tratidae, and—so we are told by a scholiast on the *Prometheus*—they interested Aeschylus. Certainly Aeschylus made an effective use of them,

<sup>1</sup> *Rep.* 400 B, (μετὰ Δάμωνα βουλευόμεθα) τίνας ἀνελευθερίας καὶ ὕβρεως ἢ μανίας καὶ ἀλλης κακίας πρέπουσαι βάσεις.

whether in the frenzy of protest against an ancient and rigid dogma :

δίχα δ' ἄλλων μονόφρων εἰμὶ, τὸ δυσσεβὲς γὰρ ἔργον—

or in the transition from the prosperity to the ruin of Troy :

μεταμανθάνουσα δ' ὕμνον Πριάμου πόλις γεραῖα—

or in the tremulous lamentation of the Oceanides over the fate of Prometheus :

στένω σε τᾶς οὐλομένης τύχας, Προμηθεῦ—

or in the first lyric system of the *Persae* where regular Ionics with their more confident and stately movement (πεπέρακεν μὲν ὁ περσέπτολις ἤδη κ.τ.λ.) close with ἀνάκλασις, to be followed immediately by trochaic verse in a very despondent tone :

ταῦτά μου μελαγχίτων  
φρὴν ἀμύσσεται φόβῳ.

But this discussion of the nature of Ionic verse belongs strictly to the next section of my subject.

## 2. THE ADAPTATION OF METRE TO CERTAIN SUBJECTS OR EMOTIONS.

Some of the more obvious facts have been collected and summarised in the preceding

these differ from the dactylic hexameter than to apprehend exactly how the one differs from the other. A dactyl is different in structure: it is longer, and its parts are equally balanced: and though Dionysius of Halicarnassus seems to say (*De Comp. Verb.* 20) that the effect of dactyls in recitation was very like that of trochees, we can scarcely doubt but that the movement was slower and the syllables more exactly measurable. Whence Aristotle was justified in saying that heroic verse was the most stately or stable and the most massive of metres.<sup>1</sup> Compared with it, the iambic trimeter and trochaic tetrameter are stirring or exciting (*κινητικά*): and the one—the latter—is akin to dancing, the other is practical, energetic, inspiring to action. Elsewhere (c. iv.) he says that the iambic trimeter approaches most closely to the tone of ordinary talk or conversation, it is *μάλιστα λεκτικόν*, illustrating this by the observation that accidental or unintentional verse effects are much more often iambic than dactylic.

All this is fairly plain and intelligible, and it seems to hold good of Latin as well as of Greek. No one can read a speech of Cicero

<sup>1</sup> *Poetics*, c. xxiv. *στασιμιάτων καὶ ὀγκωδέστατων*.

without noticing, if he watches the rhythm, the very frequent occurrence of Cretic and trochaic effects — — or — — — (venditant, venditabant). Cretic, for our present inquiry and for the rhythm of prose, is not vitally different from iambi and trochees. The frequency of this rhythm in prose may help to account for the frequent use of Cretic and Bacchiac verse in the Roman comedy: in Latin, these metres would be eminently λεκτικά. The hexameter evidently was not: it was the vehicle for the most exalted and dignified poetry. When Archilochus brought iambic verse into literature, he was taking up a popular form of metre, and using it for ordinary and unexalted purposes, for invective and the expression of personal hostility. Hipponax gave it a still more defiantly prosaic ring by weighting the last foot and making the line 'halt' or 'limp.' But if we pursue the inquiry beyond the limits of the classical languages, a strange discrepancy comes into view. The contrast does not hold in English. The verse of the heroic epos is not dactylic, but iambic: attempts to use the dactylic hexameter for such a purpose have either signally failed or have met with moderate and dubious success. And now in

view of this failure, a curious inference meets us—the rhythm of everyday speech is dactylic, and is not trochaic. If this is the case, it is probably to be explained by the frequency of words of one syllable, articles and prepositions, which are pronounced very rapidly, and go to form dactyls or anapaests. Besides this, the English accent is so strong that a great many words of three or more syllables are in effect dactylic. A confirmation of the view that ordinary speech is dactylic may be found in the comparative success with which the hexameter has been used for ordinary and not very serious topics in a poem like the ‘Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich’: the English hexameter would have served for translating the *Margites* if that work of ‘Homer’ had been preserved: it would not serve equally well for the *Iliad*. There are other curious questions of the same kind to which it would be difficult to find an answer. Why is the normal iambic line in English one of five feet, in Greek and Latin one of six? Is this also due, or due in part, to the frequency of short words in English, words of one or of two syllables?—clearly there is a slight pause after each word, and if on the average there are several

more words in an English line, the total time of the line and its general effect might be equivalent to that of a line of six feet in a different language. In ancient versification, a line of five feet is comparatively rare. It seems to occur<sup>1</sup> in the Sapphic stanza, as written by Sappho, in the first two lines of the Alcaic stanza, and in 'hendecasyllabics' (unless these be really Ionics, 'commata Sotadeorum,' as Quintilian calls them). I touch upon these points here because some of them will present themselves again when we come to consider the Roman treatment of Greek metres. Horace's caesura in the Sapphic line seems to show that he was somehow repelled from treating it as a single whole of five feet, and preferred to make it  $2\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2}$ , just as the hexameter is  $2\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{1}{2}$ , or  $3\frac{1}{2} + 2\frac{1}{2}$ .

The unequal division of the hexameter by 'caesura' leads us to the consideration of a cognate line which is equally divided, by a device for which it is convenient to use the distinct term 'diaeresis.' What is the so-called 'pentameter,' and what is an elegiac couplet? The couplet is clearly a *strophe* or stanza on

<sup>1</sup> But this would be disputed. See *infra*, pp. 236-8 and pp. 242-52.

a small scale—a strophe consisting of four κῶλα, two in each line or στίχος. It is a modification of the hexameter, and a variation in the direction of lyric poetry. The second line is quite different in effect from the first, for its movement is twice arrested by 'catalexis': and the fourth κῶλον is different from the others (for it admits dactyls only)—a principle of construction which we have already met with and which is of frequent application in larger lyric structures. Being lyric in nature, elegiac verse frequently had a musical accompaniment—Theognis (l. 241) speaks of ἀνλίσκοι—but at a quite early date it must have begun to be merely read or recited and not sung: for if it had been always sung, there would have been no need for an invariable diaeresis or word-ending in the middle of the verse—a singer's voice can prolong a syllable, as in the line

ὦ φίλος ὦ φίλε βακ-χείε, ποί οἰσπολεῖς;

but such a prolongation is quite unnatural in what is merely recited or spoken. Of the nature and effect of the verse, ancient writers give what seems a substantially true and valid account. According to Horace (*A. P.* 75), it

was first used for the expression of grief 'querimonia,' by which he probably means a *θρῆνος* or lament for the dead: similarly we are told (in a passage quoted from Didymus *περὶ ποιητῶν*) that for this purpose poets appended to the hexameter a line which did not keep pace with it, but languished and waned as if in sympathy with an ebbing life.<sup>1</sup> But soon this verse came to be used in other ways and to express the joy and exultation of success. Modern theories are not dissimilar. Its double aspect has been traced (by O. Immich) to the use of the flute in the Carian worship of Aphrodite, where first grief had to be expressed for the vanishing of Adonis (*ἀφανισμός*), and then joy for his restoration (*εὐρεσις*). Another view is that elegy began in a cry of alarm 'hostis adest, eia' the enemy is at the gates, a cry raised by the women and uttered with tearing of hair and wild gestures. The elegy and the flute certainly seem to come to the Greeks from Asia Minor: but in passing from the

<sup>1</sup> *ὅθεν πεντάμετρον τῷ ἡρωικῷ συνήπτον οὐχ ὁμοδραμοῦντα τῇ τῷ προτέρου δυνάμει, ἀλλ' ὅλον συνεκπνέοντα καὶ συναποσβεσνύμενα τοῦ τελευτήσαντος τύχαις.* With *οὐχ ὁμοδραμοῦντα* we may compare Statius' phrase, 'heroos gressu truncare tenores' (*Silvae*, v. iii. 99).

excitable barbarian to the Greek, the measure comes to be regulated and tranquillised, it loses this character of frenzy and wild alarm. So it is recorded of Solon that he prohibited excessive lamentation at funerals and the use of strains specially composed for the occasion (*πεποιημένα μὴ θρηνεῖν*). In Callinus and Tyrtaeus, the stirring call to battle is still heard (*μέχρις τεῦ κατάκεισθε*); and in Mimnermus, the verse is the vehicle of passion, though it is rather the voluptuous passion of the Ionian than the fire of Sappho or Alcaeus. But in other poets the tone is much more placid: Solon and Theognis expound in elegiac verse their views on political and social questions.

It did not occur to the Greeks of the best age that a metre of this kind could be used for a lengthy narrative. Aristotle says in the *Poetics* that no one would think of composing an epic story in any metre but the heroic hexameter. Not very long after his death this canon was to be violated. Callimachus, Hermesianax, and Alexander the Aetolian (quoted by Parthenius for the Tale of Antheus), set the example of narrative in elegiacs, an example followed by Propertius and Ovid. If not a

misuse or mistake, this was certainly the transference of a metre to a purpose for which it had not been intended. And Ovid, following Callimachus, made another transference, or misuse, of the same metre, when he used it for an *ἱαμβος*, or personal lampoon, in the *Ibis*. But the chief use which the Alexandrians made of elegiac verse was legitimate enough and in keeping with its origin and nature: they used it for those erotic or romantic strains, 'molles' or 'flebiles modi' which in some degree repelled the more robust and unsentimental spirit of Horace.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Neu miserabiles decantes elegos,' *Odes*, 1. xxxiii. 2—no more of these plaintive and pathetic strains! Horace is here addressing Tibullus. In 11. ix. he addresses a similar exhortation to another elegiac poet, Valgius (l. 9, tu semper urges flebilibus modis Mysteriis ademptum).

As to Horace and Propertius, I cannot think that there is sufficient evidence for a serious feud or rupture, as is sometimes assumed. In the principal passage which bears on this (*Epp.* 11. ii. 99) Horace is laughing at the mutual admiration of poets in general, and it is characteristic of him that he includes himself ('discedo Alcaeus'). The other evidence adduced by Mr. Postgate in his Introduction to Propertius (pp. xxxiii. and xxxiv.) seems inconclusive. But it is clear that Horace had little sympathy with the Alexandrian vein of elegy. He alludes only once, and not very respectfully, to Catullus and Calvus. He might have written elegiac verse in the *Epodes*—Archilochus had written elegiacs—but if he has a hexameter in a couplet, it

Adaptation of form to subject or matter is a general characteristic of the Greek poetry of the best age, and it is not limited to these regular and familiar types of verse. In lyric systems it assumes still more subtle forms. The early Greek poet was a musical composer as well<sup>1</sup> and he handled metre as a modern composer handles music, constructing in a strophe or in a whole stasimon a complex fabric in which the metre changed with every change of thought or feeling. Many devices, many possible variations were at his disposal. Lyric poets like Alcman and Stesichorus prepared the way for the choric systems of the tragedians. I have already referred to the effective use which Aeschylus makes of Ionics, a metre which he perhaps

is followed by an iambic senarius or some other line. Probably the only thing of which he approved in the 'cantores' was the care and patience they bestowed upon their works: 'nonumque prematur in annum'—nine years was the precise time spent by Cinna upon his *Smyrna*. Suetonius says that he has seen elegies ascribed to Horace ('venerunt in manus meas elegi sub titulo eius'): if these were not spurious, as Suetonius thinks, they must have represented a transitory phase in his poetic development and one of which his maturer judgment disapproved.

<sup>1</sup>Sometimes he also composed the movements of the chorus as well: Athenaeus (i. 21) quotes a passage of Aristophanes in which Aeschylus is made to say:

τοῖσι χοροῖς αὐτὸς τὰ σχήματ' ἐποίησεν.

derived directly from Anacreon (p. 218). In other poets, there are cases where the rhythm becomes Ionic for a moment, when the theme suggests it. In the *Rhesus*,<sup>1</sup> the mention of the wine-cup brings with it Anacreontic verse, l. 363:

κυλίκων οἶνοπλάνητοις  
ἐπιδείξαις ἀμίλλαις.

In the *Antigone* the turmoil of battle (139) and the revelry of the victors, led by Dionysus (153), suggest to the poet a choriambic rhythm: Dionysus, again, seems to cause a momentary deviation into Ionics in a well-known passage from a dithyramb of Pindar (though the text is somewhat doubtful):

ἐπὶ τὸν κισσοδέταν θεόν.


Another measure associated with Bacchic revels was a dactylic tetrapody, to which a peculiarly rapid movement was imparted by making the last foot a dactyl, and the rhythm hypermetric or continuous from one line to the next:

αἶμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν—

<sup>1</sup> I have never been convinced that the *Rhesus* is *not* a work of Euripides, composed at an early period of his life when the Athenians were interested in Thrace and its silver-mines (ῥῆ ὑπαργύρου χθονός, l. 970).

and in using this rhythm in the *Bacchae* (139, 162), Euripides had a precedent in a passage of Alcman, still extant, where a Bacchant is described milking a lioness (πολλάκι δ' ἐν κορυφαῖς ὀρέων, ὄκα κ.τ.λ.). In another line (157),

εὐα τὸν εὖιον ἀγαλλόμεναι θεόν,

Euripides appears to have further accelerated the movement by admitting three very short syllables in the place of two, an effect which might be designated by the symbol — : for it does not seem at all probable that the first two feet are Cretic (i.e. — — —). It is only, I believe, by studying the character of metrical forms, their significance and the occasions to which they are appropriate, that progress can be made in understanding the lyric systems of the Greek poets: and it seems equally clear that only by such exposition or interpretation can their metrical structure be made interesting to the learner. The arithmetical symmetry of J. H. Schmidt's *Periodometry* is to a large extent illusory, and has often resulted in putting into one group elements which are disparate or incongruous. In a recent article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies* Mr. W. Headlam has rightly insisted upon the importance

of the other line of inquiry. He is inclined, I think, to go too far in recognising echoes or recurrences of metrical effect : to regard as recurrence, for example, the repetition of --- though it is in one case in the form — — —, and in the other — — — — (χρυσοκόμας Ἀπόλλων-  
Ἰέρωνα γεραίρει).

There is another field in which adaptation of metre to theme may be traced. So far we have been considering cases where a different metre is introduced, to answer to a change of topic. But there were also certain devices—resolution, catalexis, and syncope—which could be applied to almost any metre and which might materially alter its character and effect. Trochaic verse is described in general, we have seen, as *κινητικόν, ὀρχηστικόν* in its effect, or even as *κορδακιώτερον*. But this character disappears when syncope is frequent. Thus the despondent trochees in the *Persae* already quoted (p. 219) are catalectic at first, but as the feeling of doubt and despair grows in force, and disaster looms nearer, syncopated trochees appear :

μή πόλις πύθη-ται κέναν-δρον μέγ' ἄστυ Σουσίδος.

Not unlike this is a metrical effect used by

the same poet in the first lyric system of the *Agamemnon*, where syncope near the beginning of the line serves to depict a desperate conflict of motives: 'the line too labours' and seems to have difficulty in beginning to move:

ἐπεὶ δ' ἀνάγκας ἔδω λέπαδνον.

While syncope is thus appropriate in the case of a mental struggle and a serious dilemma, the opposite metrical effect was sometimes used to express mere indecision or hesitation:

πότερα πρὸς οἴκους—

quid igitur faciám? non eam ne nunc quidem?

Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely. But to deal with them fully would be to write a complete treatise on metre. My object is only to illustrate some principles and not to elaborate a systematic theory. Before passing, however, to the subject of Roman metrical efforts, I feel constrained to touch upon a question raised by the mention of 'syncope': it is a question which will arise again, or perhaps receive a partial and tentative answer, when we come to consider the Asclepiadean verse of Horace.

or thus:  $\cup - | \cup - | - \cup | - \cup | - \underline{\cup}.$ <sup>1</sup>

The latter scheme gives us an iambus followed by a trochee: and we may discuss at the same time whether in other metres we must be prepared to recognise a trochee followed by an iambus. The *κῶλον* or group of feet *ἄριστον μὲν ὕδωρ ὁ δὲ* may be written either as  $\cup | \dot{\cup} | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \wedge$  or as  $\text{—} \cup | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \cup$ . The dactyl in the former scheme is the so-called 'cyclic' dactyl, a term for which, it must be admitted, the evidence is very slight and inconclusive (Dion. *De Comp. Verb.* 17): it is a dactyl with the time of a trochee, a *δάκτυλος τρίσημος* or *τρίχρονος*, not *τετράσημος* like the normal dactyl which can be resolved into four short syllables. What is the difference between the two notations, and which is to be preferred? The former allows no such thing as the juxtaposition of iambus and trochee or trochee and iambus, having recourse to anacrusis and syncope in the one case and to the

<sup>1</sup> I leave untouched here the question whether the last two syllables are —̣ or —̣ | —̣, one foot or two.

'cyclic' dactyl in the other, to explain the facts—the facts being a certain arrangement of long and short syllables. We have distinct evidence that the ancients recognised, for rhythm and music, a long syllable which was longer than an ordinary long. It is not disputed that syncope of some kind did exist: and indeed it seems undeniable, when we contemplate such cases as this in an Ionic passage:

λινοδόσμῳ σχεδία πορθμὸν ἀμείψας Ἀθαμαντῆδος Ἑλλας  
(where the syncopated foot or protracted syllable is —), or this in a passage of pure trochees:

ῥυσίβωμον Ἑλ-λάν-ων ἄγαλμα δαιμόνων

(where syncope occurs twice, —|—).

The history of the matter is briefly this. During last century a series of metricians strove to rationalise Greek lyric verse with the help of the rhythmic notation of modern music. They refused to recognise an ascending or iambic rhythm: iambs are simply trochees with anacrusis ♪ ♫ etc., and anapaests are dactyls with anacrusis: the syllables — — — are to be construed as — — | — and not as — — | —. Apel, Bellermann, J. H. Schmidt, Westphal and Christ all adopted this method, and it obtained wide currency

in England and America. Recently a different tendency has shown itself, and it is associated with names so distinguished—Weil, Blass, Wilamowitz-Möllendorf—that to doubt or to dissent seems hazardous. Briefly, the ‘recentiores’ have revived the choriambus and the antispast (— — — —)¹. They do not deny that there was such a thing as syncope. They do not even deny that there was such a thing as a δάκτυλος τρίσημος: they recognise it in a line like καί τις ἐπ’ ἐσχατίαισιν οἴκεις, the last line of an Alcaic stanza, or in ἀντιτύπα δ’ ἐπὶ γᾶ πέσε τανταλωθείς. Prof. Gleditsch at all events, in the third edition of his *Metrik*, seems to admit that such a dactyl must be assumed in these cases. But—and here it becomes difficult to assent without reservation—the *first* line of an Alcaic stanza is to be scanned thus:

≡ — — — — | ≡ — — — — | — — — —

‘Non nostrum est tantas componere lites’—I merely offer one or two suggestions which may help to explain the conflict of opinion. Consider the so-called ‘antispast’ or take the conjunction of two choriambi — — — — | — — — —, *impia fallacum hominum*. Is it possible to pass

¹ Some of them still speak disrespectfully of the antispast, but I think that in fact and in principle they resuscitate it.

from — to — without some kind of pause? Can the opposite movement begin at once? And if a word does not end at the place, must not the voice dwell a little on the last syllable of the iambus? The rationalising school of metricians describe such a choriambus as a dactyl followed by a syncopated foot, — — — : perhaps this is after all merely a different way of describing the same sounds. I think it must be granted that it is probably *not* the ancient way—tradition is in favour of the 'antispast.' But what this amounts to is that the ancient notation was cumbrous and imperfect: not so simple in principle or so adaptable to all cases as that of the modern musician. And perhaps we may go a little further and say that something like what the modern scheme gives us may have been felt by the ancient poet or composer, may have been half-consciously in his mind, though he would not have written out the metre in that form.<sup>1</sup> I do not know whether any of the 'recentiores' have tried to *compose*

<sup>1</sup> The shortening of a long final vowel belonged, it is admitted, to epic or dactylic verse: yet Timotheus has it 'in dem scheinbaren Daktylus des Glykoneus' (142, 144, 149). If the dactyl was only 'apparent,' we have to contemplate the scansion *ἐρθεῖν* | *μαὶ οἶα* | *τρεῖς ὅρ* | *πλοῦν* κ.τ.λ. (149).

Alcaic verse on the scheme given above, or to write Sapphics with this scheme in mind :

$\text{—} \cup \text{—} \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \cup \cup \text{—} | \cup \text{—} . \text{—} .$

I do not think that it would be very easy. And what account can be given, on this view, of the symmetry and the general effect of the Alcaic stanza? The effect seems to me to depend on this, that the third and fourth lines together repeat on a larger scale the movement which is given twice, separately, in the first line and the second line :

$\text{—} | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \wedge .$

Here there is, in the middle of the line, a transition from trochee to dactyl, but there is only one dactyl, preceded by two trochees. The third and fourth lines expand or duplicate this effect :

$\text{—} | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \text{—} | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \text{—} || \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} \cup | \text{—} \text{—}$

According to Prof. Gleditsch the scansion is

$\text{—} \text{—} \cup \text{—} | \text{—} \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} , \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} \cup \cup | \text{—} \cup \text{—} . \text{—} .$

In these choriambes and diiambi it is somewhat difficult to trace any obvious and effective movement.

Some of these questions will meet us again

in considering the versification of Horace. I leave them for the present, conceding that the school of Apel and Schmidt has probably gone too far in the other direction—too far, I think, in trying to construe *all* iambs as trochees with anacrusis: it would have been safer to limit the method to purely lyric or melic verse, which was certainly sung and had a musical accompaniment.

### 3. THE TREATMENT OF GREEK METRES BY THE ROMAN POETS.

The transference of a metre to a new language may vitally alter its character and effect, as seems to be the case when the dactylic hexameter is transplanted from Greek and Latin to English. Latin did not differ so widely from Greek as to produce a result like this: the effect of a metre was not totally obscured or inverted: but it differed widely enough to make it necessary that Greek metres should be considerably modified when they came to be cultivated on Italian soil: and the desirable modifications could be found only by prolonged experiment and effort. In the

case of the hexameter, for example, the tentative period extended to about a century and a half, from the first introduction of the measure by Ennius to the composition of the Eclogues of Virgil. The changes consisted largely in rejecting things which had been perfectly legitimate and effective in Greek. And here again (as in touching upon English verse) we may be asked the difficult question, *why* such changes had to be made. The answer in many cases would turn upon the nature and incidence of the Latin accent: in the period with which we are concerned, the accent fell with mechanical regularity on the last syllable but one or the last but two, according as the penultimate was long or short, never (or practically never) on the last. And it was a strong accent. It could not be entirely ignored: by coinciding with the ictus it might make the metrical structure too obvious: or by diverging from ictus, obscure the metre too much. The former possibility accounts, I think, for some peculiarities of the Latin hexameter, the latter for the structure of early iambic and trochaic verse.

The Greek accent, it is generally agreed,

was a variation in pitch or in the musical quality of a sound, the Latin accent was a stress-accent. In Greek, quality and quantity or duration were kept quite distinct—accent, in the classical period and down to Babrius, has no provable effect upon metrical structure.<sup>1</sup> But the Latin accent, though a stress-accent and less easily detached from quantity, was not so strong as the English accent, which dominates and obscures quantity altogether. The Latin language had in it the potentiality of strictly quantitative verse, and this was elicited by Greek influence, and especially by Ennius' introduction of the hexameter. The Latin accent was not strong enough to make an accented syllable count as long: it was strong enough to make an unaccented syllable, though long, take the place of a short one.

Obviously, with a strong accent, an iambic or trochaic effect can be obtained without any short syllables at all:

'tum cóniectúram postulat pacem petens,  
ut se edoceret postulans Apollinem,  
quo sése vértant tántae sórtis sómniūm.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An idea started by Ritschl that the fragment of a song  $\delta\lambda\epsilon\iota, \mu\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha, \delta\lambda\epsilon\iota, \kappa.\tau.\lambda.$  is accentual verse has been generally rejected as illusory.

<sup>2</sup> Ennius, *Alexander*. Somnium = somniorum.

Accent and ictus coincide in the last line, and its effect is not so very different from that of the line which precedes it and which conforms to Greek metrical principles in having an iambus in the second and fourth places. So, in the first line, the spondee in the second place is rendered innocuous or inconspicuous by accent ('coniecturam' would presumably have a slight subsidiary accent on its first syllable). To a Greek ear, the third line would be intolerably heavy: by the Augustan age Roman poets had acquired a similar sensitiveness to quantity, and lines like these of Ennius,

'in scaenam missos cum magno pondere versus,'

they condemned as crude and inartistic. But 'quo sésé vértant' was not inartistic when it was written. The early dramatic poets as a rule keep ictus and accent together: they do not put 'coniecturam' into a verse in such a position that the ictus would fall on the second and fourth syllables ('coniécturám'), and in an 'irrational' Cretic foot the middle syllable is seldom an accented one. These poets were unduly depreciated in the later age. But no doubt there *was* much that was inartistic in

their work, much that was crude and tentative, and due to an imperfect apprehension of metrical structure. A simple instance of ignorance of structure may be found in the resolution of the penultimate syllable of an iambic 'septenarius,' a syllable which was properly *τρίσημος* and not resolvable into *two* shorts.<sup>1</sup>

Little progress seems to have been made between the time of Ennius and that of Cicero, Terence must be allowed to have achieved perfection of form in comedy; for in *comedy* the old type of verse, with spondees in the second and fourth places, was appropriate enough, approaching as it did to the speech of everyday life. But Lucilius was not an artist in language or metre; new forms of verse were hardly attempted: and the later tragedians did not lift tragedy out of the groove in which it ran, it was still heavy in metre and somewhat turgid in language. In Cicero's time there is renewed activity. In the case of most metres,

<sup>1</sup> Ut eam intro consolérque eam, ne sic se excruciet ànimi.

Pl. *Rudens*, 399.

The non-catalectic 'octonarius' has already been mentioned (p. 214). In anapaests, the Roman poet was less careful than the Greek to give unity to a group of lines: he did not make the last catalectic.

it remained for the Augustan poets to add the last touches and attain to unfailing grace and finish. But the preceding generation approached very near to perfection of metrical form. Cicero himself did much for the hexameter: the influence of his *Aratea* upon his contemporaries Catullus and Lucretius has often been pointed out. The hexameter of this period is much smoother and more graceful than that of Ennius. But it tended to monotony in form,<sup>1</sup> and was not free from affectation: and Virgil had still to reveal the art of writing a sentence or period of moderate length and of a form suited to verse:

‘cedet et ipse mari vector | nec nautica pinus  
mutabit merces | omnis feret omnia tellus.’

In the preceding generation, the ‘caesura’ was less skilfully used and a sentence was often too long, spreading with its grammatical ramifications over many verses, a fault which may be observed in the very first sentence of Catullus’ *Epyllion*. Elegiac verse, hitherto hardly used except for epigrams and very short pieces, was now cultivated more carefully, and the way was prepared for Tibullus and Propertius. Metrically, the

<sup>1</sup> See footnote, p. 124.

legiac couplet had not advanced quite so far as the hexameter. A line like

'qui modo me unum atque unicum amicum habuit'

is cruder and more formless than the hexameter of its time. Catullus was here 'durus' or 'duriusculus'—rather harsh and unfinished in his manner.<sup>1</sup> Varro made many experiments in metre, in his *Saturae*, and new provinces in the realm of metre were conquered—notably by Catullus in his handling of 'hendecasyllabic' verse, a measure which, though used occasionally by a few Greek poets, had enjoyed no great vogue in Greece, as far as we know. The

<sup>1</sup> 'durus' when applied to a writer or his style had often a very simple and superficial sense. It meant harshness or awkwardness in the placing of words. Quintilian, for example, quotes a sentence of Cicero's ending in the words 'in duas divisam esse artes,' and remarks that 'in duas partes divisam esse' would have been correct, but 'durum et incompertum' (VIII. vi. 65). Catullus, as an elegiac poet, is 'durior' (than Tibullus and Propertius), x. i. 93. The elder Pliny (*Nat. Hist. Praef.* 1) thinks that in hendecasyllabics Catullus was rather harsher, rather less graceful ('duriusculus') than he would have liked Veranius and Fabullus to think him: and to remove a defect of this kind—'ut obiter molliam Catullum conterraneum meum'—Pliny would say 'nugas me aliquid meas putare' rather than 'meās esse aliquid putare nugas.' Here 'mollis' appears as the opposite of 'durus.' Catullus and his friends certainly aimed at being 'molles,' and aimed at it with a large measure of success.

'scazon' of Hipponax, and the stanza consisting of three or four Glyconic lines followed by a Pherecratean, were other metres successfully dealt with by Catullus. Horace avoids them all (except that he does use the Glyconic and Pherecratean lines, in different combinations).

The mention of Varro and of hendecasyllables brings us to what is important for the history of metre at Rome—the influence of metrical theories on metrical practice. In the days of Sappho and Alcaeus theory hardly existed: but since that time philosophers and musicians and grammarians had written and speculated much about rhythm and metre: and the learned poet of Rome, the 'doctus vates,' could not ignore their theories; he often proceeded upon theoretical grounds, and was deliberate and conscious in his metrical effects. This is eminently true of Horace, but it is also true of Catullus. The metrical theory adopted by Varro, and later by Caesius Bassus, was that of the derivation of all metres from two primary types—a theory probably originated by Heraclides Ponticus, a pupil of Plato. The two types were revealed to mankind by Apollo, in the simple form of ἡ τριών thrice repeated—the first syllable

of each word may be either long or short, and if long, we have a spondaic hexameter, if short, an iambic senarius. From these, other metres were obtained by 'adiectio' or 'detractio,' or some similar modification. The hendecasyllabic or Phalaecean line was compounded of both; it consisted of the first 'penthemimeres' of a hexameter (— — | — — — | —, 'cui dono lepidum') and the first 'penthemimeres' of a senarius (— — | — — | ≡, 'novum libellum'). The Glyconic and Pherecratean lines were ingeniously extracted from a single hexameter at one blow,

'cui non dictus Hylas puer|aut Latonia Delos.'

When the first part of the line is cut away and becomes a separate verse, the last syllable of course becomes a 'syllaba anceps,' puēr.

But if these three metres, Phalaecean, Glyconic, and Pherecratean, were thus connected with the hexameter, an inference could be drawn, and an important one for metrical practice. The first two syllables should both be long: the so-called 'basis' must be a spondee, for an iambus or a trochee has no place in a dactylic hexameter. Catullus admits a trochee or iambus: Horace does not—in the metres of

this type which he uses, Horace regularly begins with a spondee. Martial follows Horace in principle: in hendecasyllabics he invariably has a spondee in the first place. What then *was* the hendecasyllabic line, or what did Catullus suppose it to be? Most metricians of last century would answer the former question by saying without hesitation: 'it is a logaoedic pentapody.' But we have seen that this use of 'logaoedic' has recently been called in question: 'logaoedic,' it is contended, was really applied only to a line like ὦ διὰ τῶν θυρίδων καλὸν ἐμβλέποισα, where two or three dactyls are followed by trochees. Is this contention to be admitted, and is the 'cyclic' dactyl to be abandoned in most of the cases where it has been assumed? I think we must be prepared to abandon it, when the opposite theory gives a really natural and effective scheme. I have argued above (p. 238) that, in the case of the Alcaic stanza, it does not do so, but rather disguises and obscures the effect of the whole. Hendecasyllabic verse, however, can be read easily and effectively as Ionic,

'cui dóno lepidúm novum libéllum,'

— / — | — — / — | — — / —

and there is a good deal of evidence to show that the ancients really felt the verse to be Ionic and described it as such. Quintilian says that Phalaecei are 'commata Sotadeorum'—a Sotadean verse is an Ionic tetrameter catalectic, admitting ἀνάκλασις or a ditrochaeus, thus:

— — — — — | — — — — — | — — — — — | — — — — —.

If we begin at the point indicated by a dotted line, after the third syllable, we have exactly 'meās esse aliquid putare nugas.' Further evidence has been collected by Wilamowitz v. Moellendorff in a paper 'De versu Phalaeceo,' which he contributed to the *Mélanges Weil*. The Christian bishop Synesius, it is there shown, composes a hymn in which regular and unmistakable Ionics occur along with 'hendecasyllabics':

στεφανώσω σε νέοις ἄνθεσιν ἵμνων,  
ὃν βουλῆς πατρίας ἄφραστος ὥδις  
ἀγνώστων ἀνέδειξε παῖδα κόλπων,

where the first line is — — — — —. Was this then Catullus' view? Possibly it was. An iambic 'basis' is quite consistent with it, for the first foot in an Ionic series was sometimes — — ('Ἰάνων γὰρ ἀπῆύρα, Ἰακχ' ὃ πολυτίμητ' ἐν ἔδραις κ.τ.λ.). A trochee is more difficult; we

have to assume that — — may take the place of — — :

— — —  
 φίλταθ' Ἀρ|μόδι' οὔτι|που τέθνηκας,

like

ἐλθὲ τόνδ' ἀνὰ λειμῶνα χορεύσων (Ar. *Frogs*, 326).

But at this point we may be inclined to ask whether there did not perhaps exist after all a logaoedic pentapody (for the third and fourth lines of the Athenian σκολιόν are not Ionic, and a 'hendecasyllabic' line sometimes occurs in tragic lyrics in a context where we do not look for Ionics, *e.g.* Eur. *Orestes*, 833, ἡ ματροκτόνον αἶμα χερσὶ θέσθαι); whether Catullus may not have thought of his verse in that way: and whether Ionic scansion, involving as it does a strong ictus in three places,

'cui dóno lepidúm novum libéllum'

really gives us the effect which the metre had for the Romans. Was it not more tranquil? Are we justified in finding in it the perturbed and perturbing movement of Ionics? No doubt Catullus expressed in hendecasyllabics the fervour of his passion for Lesbia—any metre is capable of varied use and diverse tones; but it is difficult to believe that pieces like 'Marrucine Asini' or

‘Cenabis bene, mi Fabulle apud me’ were deliberately and consciously composed in a rhythm which was appropriate in a passage like this:

‘quonám cruenta maénas  
praecéps amore saéno  
rapitúr? quod impoténti  
facínús parat furóre?’<sup>1</sup>

Catullus is often contrasted with Horace as the inspired poet with the deliberate artist, the *μανικός* with the *εὐφύης*. But the contrast must not be pressed too far. He belonged to a group of poets who aimed at learning and accuracy: and in metrical matters he is often quite like other Roman poets—that is, tentative, careful, and even artificial. In the 55th poem, for example, he seems to be making a deliberate experiment in metre: ‘oramus si forte non molestum est’—here, and here only, he allows a long syllable to take the place of the two short syllables of a hendecasyllabic line.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Seneca, *Medea*, l. 849.

<sup>2</sup> L. Müller thinks that the frequent spondees have a special significance: ‘bene exprimitur, quantis molestiis aerumnisque conflictatus sit poeta in quaerendo Camerio’ (*De Re Metrica*, p. 182).

Similar, but more isolated—a *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον* or rather *ἄπαξ ᾄδόμενον*—is the spondaic Pherecratean in lxi. 25:

It is reasonable, however, to regard Horace as *more* deliberate, *more* conscious, *more* artificial than Catullus. And certainly Horace's lyric verse presents a number of problems to the metrician. Catullus thought that what Sappho had done he might do, very much as Ennius thought that what was effective in a Homeric hexameter would be effective and artistic in Latin too. But Horace's Sapphic verse differs from Sappho's, and his Alcaic verse from Alcaeus'. He has introduced new restrictions: restrictions which have no known Greek precedent, and which cannot be set down to the credit of any previous Roman poet either—for we have Catullus' Sapphics and Asclepiadeans, and there is no reason to doubt Horace's statement that no Roman poet before him had attempted to write Alcaics at all.<sup>1</sup> What were Horace's changes, and how

'ludicrum sibi roscido  
nutriunt umore.'

Seneca sometimes admits a spondee as the third foot of a Sapphic line. Compare also *Oedipus* 882 f. where there is a similar variation:

'quidquid excessit modum  
pendet instabili loco.'

Christ (*Metrik*,<sup>2</sup> p. 523) says that the spondee in such cases was not a 'licentia concessa' but a 'vitium numeri.' It was one of the questionable experiments of the Romans.

<sup>1</sup> *Epp.* I. xix. 32.

far can they be accounted for? Briefly enumerated, they are as follows:

(a) In Sapphic verse, he made the fourth syllable always long: and (though he abandoned his own rule at times) he made a certain 'caesura' in the dactyl normal—thus making the verse a more complex whole, made up of two parts on the principle of the dactylic hexameter.

(b) In the first three lines of the Alcaic stanza he made the anacrusis usually long and the fifth syllable invariably long, thus, as in Sapphics, imparting a new weight and dignity, a Roman 'gravitas,' to the verse: and again, as in Sapphic verse, he gave the first two lines a more complex structure by introducing what is perhaps best described as 'diaeresis,' a break analogous to that which occurs in the elegiac 'pentameter': 'odi profanum | vulgus et arceo.'

(c) In Asclepiadean, Glyconic, and Pherecratean verse he makes the so-called 'basis' invariably a spondee. This change, again, lent Roman 'gravitas' and strictness of rule to the verse: but Horace often uses it for sportive themes, and the change may be due to acceptance of a metrical theory—the Varronian one,

already mentioned, of the derivation of these metres from the hexameter.

(d) In Asclepiadean verse, Horace always makes the end of a word coincide with the end of a 'choriambus': *nullam, Vare, sacra | vitæ prius | severis arborem.*

The last of these changes raises a question which I have touched upon before, that of the 'antispast' and the 'cyclic dactyl' (pp. 234-6). How did Horace analyse the Asclepiadean metre? What reason would he give in words, if we could ask him why he modified it as he did? To that question there is no certain answer. But I think we must be prepared to contemplate the possibility that a poet sometimes modifies a metre from some vague instinct for euphony, some feeling that a certain form of a verse is more effective in given conditions: and therefore that a theory of the change he made may have substantial truth in it, although he himself perhaps would not have given the same explanation. It is in this sense, and from this point of view, that the 'cyclic dactyl' seems to have some justification. On this theory, the choriambus is really two feet, a dactyl and a syncopated or catalectic trochee, — — — — —

— — — — ^ . The verse was originally composed to be sung to music, and a singer's voice can prolong a syllable :

μηδὲν ἄλλο φυτεύ-σῃς πρότερον δένδριον ἀμπέλω.

But a long syllable of more than two times, a long that is *τρίσημος* or *τετράσημος*, is quite unnatural in mere speech or recitation : and when a form of verse ceased to be sung, and was often merely read, the poet made the long syllable always the last syllable of a word, so that the rhythm should come right by catalexis : for there is always a slight pause of some sort at the end of a word. This happened in the case of the elegiac pentameter. Now Horace really wrote for readers, though of course the lyric poet always assumes that he is 'singing' : and he probably felt that the protracted syllable would be strange and troublesome in mere reading.

I infer from this that the scansion which assumes the 'cyclic dactyl' is a *better* and more reasonable scansion, though it is not certainly that which Horace knew. For if there was no difficulty about an 'antispast,' if an iambus could be followed by a trochee without the slightest embarrassment for the reader, — — | — —, what basis

is left for an explanation of the change which Horace made in Asclepiadean verse? I do not believe that a reader *could* pass from iambus to trochee without an effort and a pause: the actual result was a slight lengthening of the long syllable of the iambus or a slight pause after it: and this effect is most accurately construed by using the notation of modern music. The alternative scansion, the 'choriambic' or iambo-trochaic, does not *explain* the facts, but merely describes them. What account can it give of Horace's pause? That he wished to make each 'choriambus' (— — — —) obvious and perceptible? But if so, why is the pause observed only in the case of the first choriambus of the shorter verse, and only in the first two of the longer? Why does the former often end with words like 'edite regibus,' the latter with 'severis arborem'? On the other theory, the matter is quite simple: for here there is no syncope or catalexis, a dactyl is followed by a trochee, — — — | — — | — ^

Whatever be the explanation of this particular change, it is at least clear that Horace did modify considerably the metres which he adopted. He introduced new principles and restrictions. And now we come to the very curious fact that he

broke the laws he had made. He nowhere puts a trochee as the second foot in a Sapphic or in the third line of an Alcaic stanza, and nowhere allows the fifth syllable in the first lines of that stanza to be short; but all his other limitations he somewhere—though it may be only once or twice—disregards. The rule of spondaic ‘basis’ he violates only *once*, in I. 36:

‘ignis Iliacas domos.’

But in rarity or infrequency comes the neglect of the ‘diaeresis’ in Alcaics:

‘spectandus in cer|tamine Martio.’

Compared with these cases, deviation from the normal Sapphic ‘caesura’ is comparatively frequent. When it occurs, it is not a wide deviation; it consists only in substituting the ‘trochaic’ or Homeric division of the dactyl, — —, — :

‘Phoebe silvarumque | potens Diana.’

Virgil does not allow himself a line like this: ‘illius’

‘ille mi par | esse | deo videtur.’

The trochaic caesura is specially frequent in the *saeculare*: that is, when, like Sappho,

he was composing what was undoubtedly and obviously meant to be sung—for, like the pause in Asclepiadean verse, the Sapphic 'caesura' and the Alcaic diaeresis are not, I think, entirely unconnected with the transition from singing to reading: a verse that suited song might be too slight and thin and rapid when it was merely read. The trochaic caesura is also fairly frequent in the odes of the Fourth Book, composed about the same period of Horace's life as the *carmen saeculare*, and published only three or four years later. The sixth may have been written, as Kiessling suggests, when Horace was commissioned by Augustus to compose an ode for the *Ludi saeculares*: and it is probably not a mere accident or coincidence that where Horace pictures himself as a chorodidascalos—as teaching an actual choir to sing his strains—he departs from his prevailing caesura and has the trochaic one: 'Lesbium servate pedem meique pollicis ictum.'

What of the pause in Asclepiadean verse? How does Horace treat that? He observes it with great regularity. There is one apparent exception:

'dum flagrantia detorquet ad oscula,' (II. xii. 35)

and one where the authenticity of the text has been questioned :

‘non incendia Carthaginis impiae.’ (IV. viii. 17)

As to the former, there is some reason to think that in a compound like ‘detorquet’ the preposition was felt to be slightly detached from the other part of the word : and this may lead us back to consider again the violations of the ‘diaeresis’ in Alcaics. They are five in number, and only two of them are real, the instance quoted above (VI. xiv. 17) and I. xxxvii. 14 :

‘mentemque lympa | tam Mareotico.’

The others are like ‘detorquet’ :

‘hostile aratrum ex | ercitus insolens.  
antehac nefas de | promere Caecubum.  
utrumque nostrum in | credibili modo.’<sup>1</sup>

The second exception to the Asclepiadean pause is one which Horace may very well have admitted, if we reflect upon his *two* violations of

<sup>1</sup>See Dr. Gow’s Introduction to the *Odes*, p. xxviii, where these and similar peculiarities are collected. Dr. Gow does not discuss the reasons for Horace’s changes, but he gives the facts in a convenient form. Beginners should perhaps be warned that when Dr. Gow says that the Alcaic diaeresis ‘was not used by the Greeks’ or the Horatian caesura in Sapphics ‘not used by Sappho,’ it is not meant that those things *never* occur in the Greek poets, but only that they are optional with them, not regular.

the diaeresis in Alcaics: and it would have special precedent and justification in so far as a proper name, *Carthaginis*, is involved—metrical rules were always regarded as capable of some slight relaxation when proper names had to be introduced by the poet. It would seem, therefore, that there is no *metrical* objection to the line: if its authenticity is impugned, it must be on other grounds, such as the fact that the ode is exceptional as it stands in having a number of lines which is not divisible by four, and the apparent association of the *younger* Scipio with Ennius.

Horace binds fetters upon himself and occasionally shakes them off, by way of showing that they are self-imposed. We may safely assume his position to be this: 'I regard these changes as improvements, at all events for lyric composition in Latin: but, of course, they are only preferences of mine: I am not bound by them, and I choose to make that clear by occasionally departing from them.' And it may be added that he does not admit any of the deviations in the first nine odes of the First Book—a group of odes (answering in number, as L. Müller pointed out, to the number of the



Muses) which he perhaps specially selected and placed there as examples of his lyric art.<sup>1</sup>

The result of the whole inquiry, as far as the text of Roman poets is concerned, seems to be this: an editor should be slow to assume that what is metrically exceptional affords a reason for doubting the text or resorting to conjectural emendation. The poet may have gone astray, through imperfect appreciation of the structure of a Greek metre: or he may have made what he knew to be a mere experiment: or he may have reverted to what he knew to be a quite legitimate form of the metre he was using. In the *Attis* of Catullus, for example, I think it would be very unsafe to say that passages like 'et earum omnia adirem' and 'stadio et gymnasiis' (— — — — — and — — — — —) are metrically unsound and must be emended; is it not quite likely that the variation is deliberate and even instructive? The poet wishes us to see that he knows quite well what metre he is using, and considers himself at liberty to write pure Ionic verse in place of the prevailing

<sup>1</sup> The nine odes are in nine different metres. A short anacrusis in Alcaics does occur in them (ix. 1, 'vides ut alta'), but it may be doubted whether Horace ever laid upon himself any rule, or contemplated any regular practice, in regard to that syllable.

ἀνακλόμενοι. He is perhaps doing exactly what Horace does when he deviates from his own rule or practice in Sapphic and Alcaic verse. It is often no easy matter to say what is metrically legitimate and what is not.

‘non quivis videt immodulata poemata iudex’—

When Horace wrote that line, he *meant* to write a line which would perplex the uncritical ‘iudex,’ for it has the appearance of lacking a proper ‘caesura,’ and it is understood only when we recall the slight detachment of the negative prefix which has been already mentioned (‘utrumque nostrum in | credibili modo’):<sup>1</sup> and unless we credit the Roman poets, and Horace in particular, with a large measure of purpose and subtlety in their metrical effects, we shall probably misunderstand them and ‘emend’ them where there is no need for emendation.

<sup>1</sup> The same assumption is required to explain a hexameter of Lucilius:

‘Scipiadae magno in-probus obiciebat Asellus,’

and another in Lucretius:

‘quid enim in-mortalibus atque beatis.’



Don't let  
it go on.

## VIII.

### LITERARY CRITICISM AT ROME.<sup>1</sup>

THE term 'Literary Criticism' does not suggest to us any very definite and certain form of knowledge: as we meet with the thing in everyday life, it consists often of irresponsible and anonymous remarks, with which one frequently disagrees, published in some weekly or monthly journal. But even in modern times there are books containing sound and solid literary criticism, not perhaps reduced to system, but sufficiently certain and precise to be considered a 'science.' In ancient times such a science existed rather more obviously and completely, because it was fostered and developed in the schools of Rhetoric. Clearly such a

<sup>1</sup> A lecture given in October, 1897, intended as introductory to the study of Quintilian's Tenth Book. The two following lectures were given in October, 1898, and October, 1896, respectively.

science ought to be possible : a science which would deal with literary products as Botany deals with plant-forms or Geology with rock-forms : which would not waste its time in the often barren inquiry whether A or B, Sophocles or Aeschylus, is the *greater* poet, but would try rather to discriminate and describe the peculiar qualities of each : which would call our attention to the ideas which were 'in the air' at a particular period, and which inspired a particular generation of writers : would trace the influence of earlier authors upon a later one, would show how he dealt with his materials, and would trace the influence which he in turn exercised upon his successors. It was in the first of these inquiries that ancient criticism was especially strong. It discriminated qualities of style with considerable accuracy and certainty : it had names for these qualities, adjectives which are often subtle and difficult to render in English, but which are rarely vague or nebulous. Perhaps ancient literature presented less difficult problems to the critic than modern literature does : the mechanism of style was simpler, the effects were more easily analysed, there was less diversity of aim and less eccentricity in the

authors. Writing was more consistently thought of as an art. At Rome, literary criticism played an important part in the development of literature. Many of the best writings of the Greeks were produced in an age when literary criticism hardly existed. There were no grammarians in the days of Aeschylus and Pindar, though the latter perhaps lived to see the composition of the first Textbook of Rhetoric in Sicily. But with the Romans the case was very different. When *they* began to write, the Greeks had already advanced far in the science and art of literary criticism, and the first Latin poet—if poet he can be called—was a Greek schoolmaster of Tarentum.

Literary criticism of a kind existed from very early times—casual and isolated criticism which asked rather *what* an author said than *how* he said it. Hesiod tending his flocks on Helicon saw with wondering eyes the forms of the nine Muses float before him: they gave him a wand of laurel, and said, ‘Many false tales can we tell that bear the likeness of truth, and many true tales, if we choose to tell them.’ They told the false tales to Homer, perhaps we are to

understand, 'the true tales to me.' Early attempts to consider the nature of poetry or to estimate poets resulted often in the conclusion that the poet 'told lies.' It took a long time and a great deal of discussion to mitigate this prejudice in the Greek mind. Aristotle is perhaps the only critic who rises clearly above the point of view from which such objections are raised. It would be easy to multiply instances of incidental criticism, remarks made upon particular authors before there was any thought of an art of Poetry or Prose, a definite τέχνη with rules of its own. Semonides quotes with approval, as the 'finest thing said by the man of Chios,' the despondent line in which we are told that 'the generations of men fade and pass away like the leaves of the forest.' The active and energetic Solon rebukes the pleasure-loving Ionian, Mimnermus, for wishing to die at the age of sixty. It is in the fifth century that the notion of distinct literary art begins to appear. Corinna impresses upon Pindar the necessity of self-restraint and artistic parsimony, 'You are to sow with the hand and not with the sack.' Sophocles is conspicuous among Greek poets for his critical insight: he seems

to have been—what is very rare—a good critic of his own work, distinguishing acutely three phases of style through which he had passed. He also contrasted himself with his great predecessor and his great successor in often-quoted sayings: of Aeschylus, that he did the right thing without knowing it or being able to explain it: of Euripides, that he represented men ‘as they are,’ whereas he himself represented them ‘as they should be’ (which seems to me rather the more likely interpretation of the words as Aristotle quotes them). The professional *critic*, so far as he existed, was not at first very happy in his efforts. He did not appreciate Homer so well as the populace or so well as men of action. It is told of Alcibiades that he once entered a school and demanded a copy of Homer: the master had none to produce, and Alcibiades promptly boxed his ears for him. So it was in later ages. Alexander, Aemilius Paullus, and Scipio were strong admirers of Homer, as were Condé and Turenne in a much later age, the seventeenth century. The critics often sought in Homer what it is not the poet’s business to give: exact information on geography, tactics, history, or theology. When the information

proved to be inaccurate, they joined in the cry that Homer 'told lies.'

Criticism in early Greece was not, however, always concerned with particular authors or particular sayings. Some general issues, some questions of principle did come to the front. One of them we have already touched upon, the inquiry as to the kind of *truth* to be expected from the poet. There was what Plato calls 'a feud of long standing,' *παλαιά τις διαφορά*, on this subject between Poetry and Philosophy. Plato himself took part in the fray, but Aristotle did not. Secondly, there was an interesting controversy about music and the relation of music to words: the lyre was Hellenic, the flute Asiatic and sensuous; this was a *very* ancient controversy, one of the earliest incidents of which was the flaying of Marsyas by Apollo! To make the words subordinate to the music came under the same condemnation. The Greek liked what was clear, articulate, and definite, what had one meaning, and one meaning only. Thirdly, there was an inquiry which Lessing revived, and which has bulked pretty largely in modern discussions, whether Painting and Poetry were

arts sufficiently similar to allow of our arguing from the one to the other. Sophocles held Lessing's view on this point, that the rules of the two are essentially different: a painter must not take too literally Homer's 'rosy-fingered'—he would paint the hand of a dyer, *πορφυροβάφου χείρας ἀλλ' οὐ γυναικὸς καλῆς*.

The fourth century was chiefly remarkable in literature for the great development of Prose which it witnessed, and for the formulation of rules for oratory and other forms of prose by distinguished trainers and rhetoricians like Thrasymachus and Isocrates. Between this period and the beginning of Roman literature lies the Alexandrian age, and it was the work of the Alexandrian and Pergamene scholars that affected the Romans most nearly and most powerfully. 'Scholars' is the word perhaps which we should use in speaking of these critics. They were *γραμματικοί*, men of letters, litterati: not 'grammarians' in a narrow or elementary sense—the teacher of the elements of grammar is *γραμματιστής* or *litterator*. They were 'scholars' and they were also writers, poets many of them, or at all events elegant composers of verse. It was an age of scholastic discussion, and in

fact often of very acrimonious discussion. Apollonius is known as 'the Rhodian' because he lived for many years at Rhodes when Callimachus had made things unpleasant for him at Alexandria. There are echoes of this quarrel in Theocritus, where we hear of 'birds that cackle in fruitless rivalry against the notes of the bard of Chios,' the swan-song of Homer. Theocritus was a friend of Callimachus, and Apollonius was one of these birds. I refer to this because we have here the literary precedent for some things in the Eclogues of Virgil.

Here, again, we may ask, as we asked in regard to the earlier age, what general principles were involved, what wider issues were debated? There were at least two questions which call for notice, one literary and one grammatical.

In the sphere of literature, Callimachus held that a large epic poem was no longer possible, or at all events that the large and ambitious efforts made by some of his contemporaries were mistaken. There was a good deal of truth in this contention, at least for Alexandria, where there was no national life or patriotic interest to inspire a great epic. The wisest thing for the learned poet to do was to dis-

play his delicate and skilful workmanship on a small scale, in an Idyll or an Elegy. These were the two forms of poetry cultivated with most success. They indicate a considerable change both in the theme and the spirit of poetry. In the Idyll, it is no longer the life of kings and great warriors that is portrayed, as in Homer and Tragedy, but scenes from everyday life, the joys and sorrows of humble people—fishermen or shepherds or ‘women at the Festival of Adonis’ (Theocr. xv.). In the Elegy, the poet gave expression to his personal feelings and thoughts: his poetry was the very opposite of Homer’s, where the poet himself never appears before us at all. The Alexandrian theory and practice of poetry exercised a profound influence upon the poets of Rome: not upon the early poets, for Ennius went back to Homer or Euripides for his inspiration, but upon the generation to which Catullus belonged, and upon the Augustan age. Catullus’ friends decried Ennius just as Callimachus had decried the ambitious epic in the manner of Homer. No doubt many Roman epics deserved this condemnation, such as the ‘*Volusi annales*’ which, Catullus predicts, will perish

at Padua where they were composed, and serve only as loose wrappers for the humble mackerel.

‘Paduam morientur ad ipsam  
et laxas scombris saepe dabunt tunicas’;

but it was not true of Rome, as it had been of Alexandria, that a great epic was now impossible. The Romans were a great nation, and there was a national idea to inspire such a poem. In the next generation Virgil accomplished the task, in that happy interval secured for the Roman world by Augustus, when the civic strife and corruption of the Republic had ceased, and the depressing and degrading effect of despotism was not yet felt.

The grammatical question which the Romans inherited from the scholars of Alexandria and Pergamos was one which has its counterpart in the history of modern scholarship. The Alexandrians upheld the principle of *ἀναλογία*, regularity or uniformity in language: the Pergamenes believed rather in *ἀνωμαλία*, irregularity or unevenness’: grammar and idiom in their view could not be reduced to hard and fast general rules. The Pergamenes were Stoics in Philosophy, and they held the Stoic view that language came to exist originally

by nature and not by arbitrary convention or agreement, φύσει, not συνθήκη. But they seem to have regarded the use of language in its later stages as to some extent arbitrary. The Alexandrians, on the other hand, laid down strict rules about the usage of words. 'δαίς' meant a banquet, a feast partaken of by men: it could not be applied to the feeding of animals. Homer, therefore, probably did not say οἰωνοῖσί τε δαῖτα in the fifth line of the *Iliad*, but οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι. Here a good method is carried too far and applied too rigidly. The rule about δαίς has to be supplemented by another rule or reservation to the effect that a poet may use such a word figuratively or metaphorically, as Aeschylus undoubtedly did when he wrote ὄρνισι δαίπνον. Again, to take a Latin instance from grammar or accident, we may arrive at the general rule that the accusative in the third declension ends in *-em*. But the upholder of ἀνωμαλία adduces exceptions. The accusative of *sitis* is not *sitem*, but *sitim*. So the dispute goes on, and exceptions are gradually collected and arranged, until all the phenomena of the language are classified—a result in Latin which seems to be within view when we come to Cicero's contemporary, Varro.

In grammar, at all events, *ἀναλογία* is bound to triumph in the end. The exceptions group themselves into subordinate rules. In matters of literary interpretation, and especially in the interpretation of poets, its triumph is not so obvious. The subordinate rules are often so subtle and complex that it would be an almost endless task to formulate them as a system. In this sense, many English scholars are adherents of *ἀνωμαλία*, for instance Sir Richard Jebb. The scholars of Germany and Holland have tended rather to believe in *ἀναλογία*: Cobet, for example, is distinctly an analogist.

Pergamene influence was felt at Rome earlier than that of Alexandria. In 165 B.C. Crates of Mallos, the head of the Pergamene school, was sent as an envoy to Rome. An accident contributed to the diffusion of his teaching. The streets of the city were not kept in perfect repair: Crates fell into a 'cloaca' and broke his leg. During a long period of convalescence he diverted himself with what does not perhaps strike one as an obvious form of amusement—giving lectures. His discourses, we are told, were listened to with great attention and enthusiasm by the youth of Rome. By the end

of the century—the second before Christ—great progress had been made. The ‘Scipionic circle,’ with Lucilius for its exponent, cultivated and diffused an enlightened interest in literary matters. In grammar, Pergamos had had the start of Alexandria; but Alexandrian ideas were beginning to be known. Aelius Stilo, the teacher of Cicero and Varro, was probably an analogist. Stilo was specially interested in Plautus. He declared that ‘if the Muses were to speak Latin, they would have chosen the speech of Plautus: “Plautino sermone locuturas fuisse, si Latine loqui vellent.”’ He also examined critically the plays which went under the name of Plautus, and pronounced fifteen of them genuine. This was the kind of work which the Alexandrians had done for Greek poets. The scholars of Alexandria and Pergamos had also occupied themselves with another not unimportant task—that of drawing up a ‘canon’ or authoritative list of the best writers in a particular branch of literature. There was a canon of ten epic poets, headed by Homer; a canon of ten orators, headed by Demosthenes. It was not perhaps a very profitable inquiry whether a particular writer should be placed third or fourth on such a list.

But the 'canons' were drawn up, on the whole, with sound judgment, and their compilers, performed for the world a service which they themselves could not foresee. They helped to bring about the result that the really great writers were widely read and used as school-books. Copies of them were multiplied, copies of excluded writers became fewer and fewer. Hence the really great writers had a better chance of surviving the period of destruction and confusion, and what has come down to us in modern times is a great deal of the best and not a great deal of the worst products of ancient literature. The Romans in the time of Scipio began to imitate the Alexandrians and Pergamenes in drawing up 'canons.' One such canon is extant, composed by Volcarius Sedigitus, in iambic verses. It puts in order the poets of the 'palliata,' the form of comedy which Plautus and Terence wrote, adapted from the New Comedy of Athens. Caecilius comes first, Plautus is an 'easy second,'

'Plautus secundus facile exsuperat ceteros,'

next comes Naevius, and Terence stands fifth. Ennius is allowed a place at the end:

'decimum addo, causa antiquitatis, Ennium.'

The precise principle on which this order was arrived at has not been discovered. But the place assigned to Ennius is probably right enough. He did little in comedy, and what is extant of his other works does not suggest that he had any special aptitude for it.

Early in the next century—in the year 88 B.C.—there was opened at Rome the first distinctively Latin school of Rhetoric: a school where Rhetoric was not taught in Greek or by Greeks, and where it was taught apart from grammar as an independent art or science. A little later, the influence of Alexandrian poetry began to be felt. In 72 the Mithradatic war brought to Rome a Greek named Parthenius, whose native place Nicaea had been taken, just as two centuries earlier the war with Tarentum had resulted in the coming of Andronicus, who translated the *Odyssey*, and laid the first foundations of a new literature based on that of Greece. Parthenius was a living poet of the Alexandrian school, and he probably did much to form the taste and direct the energies of the group of poets known as ‘cantores Euphorionis,’ most of them young men of rank, friends of Catullus from North Italy, and bitter opponents of Cæsar. It was

perhaps their anti-Cæsarian spirit that caused them to be ignored or spoken of slightly by the Augustans—Horace, for example, has only one not very respectful allusion to Catullus. But they played a useful part in the development of literature. Often lapsing into mere prettiness and ingenuity of expression, often lost in deserts of minute mythological learning, they inculcated the lesson of artistic toil, the necessity for the ‘limae labor,’ the worthlessness of rough and slipshod work ; and they brought almost to perfection some of the less ambitious forms of poetry : the Epigram and the short Lyric, the Idyll and the Elegy, though the last did not reach in their hands anything like the fluent and mechanical precision of form which it has in Ovid. Lucretius held aloof from them, and persisted in admiring Ennius.

The question of ‘Analogia’ continues to be debated. Julius Cæsar composed a treatise *De Analogia* in two books. According to Fronto, it was composed almost on the field of battle, ‘inter tela volantia,’ amid hurtling javelins, ‘inter classica et tubas,’ amid the blasts of the war trumpet. It was really written on a journey, when Cæsar was crossing the Alps to rejoin

his army in the winter 53-52 B.C. The work was addressed to Cicero, for whom Cæsar expressed the highest admiration. He was writing 'de ratione Latine loquendi' on the rules of pure and correct Latin idiom; and while he recognised Cicero's great services to Latin letters, we may conjecture that some of Cicero's innovations in vocabulary would not altogether be approved by him. For he was a strict purist and a firm believer in 'Analogy.' 'Habe semper in memoria atque in pectore, ut tamquam scopulum sic fugias inauditum atque insolens verbum'; an unprecedented and unfamiliar word you are to avoid as you would avoid a reef or rock. 'Latine loqui' was a thing to which the Romans attached great importance. Lucretius as well as Cicero sometimes innovated more boldly than the strict canons of Cæsar would allow. In the next generation, it is clear that the poets had to contend against similar criticism. Horace in the *Ars Poetica* pleads ardently for a reasonable measure of liberty. Why should not Virgil and Varius be allowed to do what Caecilius and Plautus did? In a great many cases resistance to innovation meant resistance to Graecisms; there was a national and patriotic

motive as well as a literary one. Many of Horace's new turns of speech are distinctly Greek : 'desine querelarum,' 'regnavit populorum,' 'invideor.' Cæsar, we learn from one of the few notices extant of his book, insisted upon declining Calypso, Calypsonem, on the analogy of Juno, Junonem. Ennius had declined Dido, Didonis; Hector, Hectōris. The Augustan poets used the smoother and less cumbrous Greek forms for Greek proper names, Hectōra rather than Hectōrem. Virgil offended against a Cæsarian canon by using 'hordea' (barley) in the plural. One of his 'obtrectatores' assailed him for it : 'we shall hear of tritica next'—

'Hordea qui dixit superest ut tritica dicat.'

These are minute points, some of them almost trivial. But much literary discussion at Rome turned upon such things, and one would not give a true impression of Roman literary life without letting them bulk pretty largely in the account. The combination of grammatical with literary study is characteristic of Alexandria and Rome. The cultivation of Rhetoric on the other hand, another feature of Roman letters,

came from Pergamos and Rhodes, not from Alexandria. Alexandria studied Poetry and Science, Pergamos Rhetoric and Philosophy.

In the age of which we are now speaking, that of Augustus, some changes took place which tended to stimulate literary criticism and interest in literature generally. The first public library was founded by Asinius Pollio, and Augustus followed his example by founding the great Palatine Library in 28 B.C. Another new thing introduced by Pollio was the practice of recitations: the author read his work aloud, before publishing it, to a group of friends, and endeavoured to profit by their criticisms and suggestions. This was a very frequent practice under the Empire. It encouraged clever writing and a declamatory manner, and it sharpened the faculties of the hearer or critic. Pollio himself was a severe and exacting judge: he found 'Patavinitas' in Livy, he was dissatisfied with Cicero's style, and he doubted Cæsar's veracity, he objected to Catullus' grammar, and had faults to find with Sallust! There was much literary activity under the early Emperors, though never again the vigour and productivity of the Augustan era. Critical and gram-

mathematical study went on apace ; and while there was no doubt much arbitrary judgment, pedantry, and eccentric taste, there was also a large mass of sound and exact knowledge, revealed to us in many of its branches by the work of Quintilian.

But we have dwelt long enough upon the history of criticism at Rome. It remains to ask, What were the general characteristics of Roman literary criticism? Has it any broad and recurrent qualities or defects? It certainly had its limitations, especially in regard to poetry. It was not so instructive as the thought of the Greeks on these subjects. It did not consider in the same way the ultimate nature and aim of poetry. Early writers who were mere translators claimed the name 'poeta,' and were allowed to bear it. Society at first did not rate the poet very highly or take him very seriously. He was spoken of as a 'scriba' or 'scriptor,' if not by the more opprobrious term 'grassator' (vagabond or idler). In the Augustan age this was not so: the old words 'carmen' and 'vates' came into vogue: 'vates' meant an inspired singer, not a mere maker of verses or an idle dreamer. Even in Plautus there is some notion

of the imaginative and inventive power of the poet :

‘quasi poeta, tabulas cum cepit sibi,  
quaerit quod nusquamst gentium, reperit tamen,  
facit illud veri simile quod mendacium est’<sup>1</sup>—

‘like a poet, who takes his writing tablets and searches for what nowhere exists, yet finds it all the same, who lends the likeness of truth to what is a lie.’ The ‘mendacium’ recalls an old conception of the poet, which we have seen to be not unfamiliar with the Greeks. The Romans tended to expect the poet to tell them what was ‘true,’ in the spirit of Hesiod. They cultivated didactic and historical poetry, and it obscured their perception of what poetry really is. The judgments pronounced upon poets by the Romans are rarely free from some narrowness or prejudice. There was a good deal of mutual admiration in some poetic circles at Rome, certainly among the ‘cantores,’ who were very ready to predict immortality for one another’s works :

‘Saecula permaneat nostri Dictynna Catonis.’

A little later, Horace seems in one passage to have a quiet laugh at Propertius for allowing

<sup>1</sup> *Pseudolus*, 401-3.

himself to be drawn into such exchange of compliments and for delighting to be called the Callimachus of Rome. In the Roman estimate of Greek poets, again, there was some lack of perspective. The Alexandrians were too near to be seen in their true proportions. We agree with Ovid when he says that Homer will live while Ida and Tenedos remain: but it is not so easy to follow him when he goes on to pay a still more startling compliment to the astronomical versifier Aratus:

‘Cum sole et luna semper Aratus erit.’

The Roman critic did not possess the clearness of vision and balanced judgment of the best Greek thinkers. He drifted from one extreme to another. If he was enamoured of literary form and finish he saw no merit in Ennius at all. If he belonged to the reaction, he refused to see in Ennius any faults. Horace frequently sketches for us the current criticism of his day: if we may trust him, it was somewhat obtuse and one-sided, warped by national prejudice, and often tending to admire old poets for what was least admirable in them. But Horace himself is less than just to some of the old

writers; an enthusiast for careful and artistic work, he is unduly repelled by what is rough and loose in their style. It is not in criticism of poets, or criticism by poets, that we are to look for the best that the Romans could do in the appreciation and description of literature; it is rather in prose discourses upon prose; and if we may single out one work, the *Brutus* of Cicero may be taken as representing Roman criticism at its best. Here Cicero describes for us with convincing lucidity and wealth of language the orators whom he has known. The treatise is one which would well deserve to be much read were it not for the fact that many of the speakers whom he delineates are to us mere names. Their speeches have not been preserved, and some of them were never committed to writing. It is when Cicero describes his great rival Hortensius, or gives us an account of his own early training, that the work gains in real interest for us; and these portions of it—towards the end—should certainly be read by all students of Latin prose style. Apart from the critical writings of Cicero and the admirable 'Dialogue' of Tacitus, the tenth book of Quintilian is the piece of critical

writing which has most interest for us. In the first chapter, Quintilian reviews the literature of Greece and Rome, and briefly characterises most of the more important authors. His judgments are sometimes denounced as limited, prosaic, and commonplace. But there is a good deal to be said on the other side. His point of view is of necessity practical: he is not giving us literary criticism for its own sake, but answering the question, What authors make the best reading for the future orator? That he should be somewhat brief and prosaic is only natural. And he is not so very prosaic. There is a good deal of subtlety and imaginative insight in the vocabulary of the Roman critic. Those who think Quintilian's criticisms dull and obvious might be invited to *translate* such things as the often-quoted epithets for Thucydides and Herodotus: 'densus et brevis et semper instans sibi Thucydides'; 'dulcis et candidus et fusus Herodotus.' 'Laetus' and 'pressus' are favourite terms for opposite qualities of style. Both are distinctly picturesque and imaginative. 'Laetus' is the poetic and rustic adjective for luxuriant and abundant crops, as in Virgil's 'quid faciat laetas segestes,' 'pressus' is a metaphor from

the pruning of the vine, 'premere falce.' In all practical matters of literary or oratorical training, Quintilian shows the most conspicuous good sense and soundness of judgment. Purely literary criticism, at all events of poets, was not his business. When he dismisses Lucretius with the one word 'difficilis,' we recall to his detriment the happier and more appreciative phrase of his contemporary Statius, 'docti furor arduus Lucreti.' Quintilian was no doubt too ready to attach to an author a current or conventional 'label': but when it is specially commonplace and formal, it is usually obvious that he is giving what is traditional because it suffices for his purpose, and not attempting to express a view of his own.



## IX.

### A SKETCH OF THE REVIVAL AND PROGRESS OF CLASSICAL STUDIES IN EUROPE.

IT is now some five centuries since the study of the classics was revived, and since a fresh impulse was given to intellectual life in Western Europe by that revival. Classical Learning, Scholarship, or Philology—we may use any one of these phrases vaguely for the present—has passed through many phases, it has been approached in various ways, and regarded from various points of view. At one time one nation took the lead in it, at another, another. It is instructive to inquire what each age attempted: it helps to form our own idea of what Scholarship or Education should be. The first period may be called the Italian. It was in Italy that the fetters of the Middle Ages were first

broken: it was there that the darkness was first dispelled by new rays of light. Macaulay (in his essay on Machiavelli) remarks that in Italy the darkness had been less opaque than elsewhere. 'The night which descended upon her was the night of an Arctic summer.'

It was, roughly, about the middle of the fourteenth century—1350—that the new movement began. For seven centuries, or more, before that date, there had been little or no intellectual progress in Europe. The causes of this intellectual torpor were various. There was no free political life: and not much security or repose, when the Roman imperial system was broken up. The mind of Europe was fettered by rigid dogma: the philosophy of Aristotle, so far as it was known, was turned into a cast-iron system in which no large principle could be questioned. Greek was almost unknown in the West: but the great Greek writers were still studied at Byzantium, expounded and excerpted with vast industry, but with no real appreciation of their spirit, under the pressure of sacerdotalism and despotism. The Eastern Empire was encroached upon by successful Arabian inroads. The invaders, however, were

not mere barbarians. They appropriated Greek learning as well as Greek territory. Aristotle's writings were translated into Syriac and Arabic. These versions were in turn translated into Latin when the Saracens extended their conquests towards the West. Thus the doctrines of Aristotle were conveyed to Western Europe—surely the most circuitous and unsatisfactory method by which the thoughts of a great teacher have ever been imparted to mankind! The poetry and imaginative literature of the Middle Ages was fantastic and unreal. The old Greek and Roman stories were known from Ovid and other sources, but they were cast into a form which would have repelled and amused the Greeks and Romans. The renewed influence of Greece and Rome was needed to inculcate a saner judgment, a firmer grasp of the realities of life, and a more acute sense for what is consistent and beautiful in literary form. What the Middle Ages bestowed upon classic texts was not appreciative study, but mechanical labour. The copying of manuscripts was sedulously practised in many monasteries, though forbidden in others. It was at best an exercise, sometimes imposed to keep the weaker brethren

out of mischief, or to enforce the lesson of industry and perseverance. There were glimmerings of light at times, bold attempts made by individuals to arrive at better methods. But there was no diffused vitality. The classical writers, on the whole, met with neither insight nor respect: one or other of their ideas was taken to stop a gap in some fabric of scholastic dogma, very much as a fragment of an ancient marble pillar was sometimes inserted in the wall of a house.

The dawn of a better age was accompanied by the study of Greek. If we summarise very roughly the debt we owe to Greece and Rome, we may say that Poetry and Thought, Science and Philosophy, belong to Greece: Rhetoric and Law have come to us from Rome. But Rhetoric is not in itself an inspiring force or impulse: it is only mastery of expression, the deliberate pursuit of dignity and grace in language. There must also be ideas to expound; and these were ultimately Greek. To Dante, who wrote his great poem about 1300, Virgil was still the poet of poets, a position of supremacy which the Roman owed in part to the supposed Messianic prophecy of the fourth Eclogue and

to the fact that, in some of his views of human life, he seemed to make a near approach to the ideas of Christian morality. But Greek began to be known to Italian poets of the next generation. Petrarch, who wrote much Latin, both in verse and prose, knew some Greek in his old age, and Boccaccio knew more. Through Boccaccio's efforts, a chair of Greek was instituted at Florence in 1357, and its first occupant was his former tutor, a Calabrian Greek named Leontius Pilatus.

The impulse, then, was Greek: but the form which the new ideas took, the spirit in which the early Italian 'humanists' worked, was largely Roman. What was revived in literature was the culture of Roman imperial times; elegance of style was striven after, to write prose like Cicero's, or to compose graceful and correct Latin verses. The point of view was 'aesthetic': the aim was to enjoy the classics as literary masterpieces and to imitate them as far as different conditions allowed. It was a time of literary enthusiasm rather than of laborious research. This enthusiasm resulted in the eager quest of classical texts, and many were brought to light from the neglected libraries of the

monasteries. Poggio Bracciolini, papal secretary at the Council of Constance in 1416, was conspicuous for his zeal in this pursuit. In the course of his visit to Switzerland he discovered at St. Gallen a Quintilian, as well as texts of Lucretius, Manilius, and other Latin poets. It is difficult for us now to realise the feelings of a discoverer like Petrarch or Poggio. If we suppose that the works of Shakespeare and Milton were entirely lost and that we in this country knew little of any literature, but had become aware of the value of a great literature and had felt its spell: and that in these circumstances a copy of *Hamlet* or *Paradise Lost* came to light: we may form some idea of what is meant to the Italian humanists to recover a lost work of Cicero. The analogy is not an inexact one. It was not an alien literature that they were unearthing. Cicero and they were alike Italians. Some of them wished to revive the ancient form of the language and to make Latin once more the speech of Italy. In the last ten years the experience of Poggio has been in some degree repeated, at least for the scholar and specialist, in the case of Greek authors. We have recovered the Ἀθηναίων πολιτεία,

Herondas and Bacchylides. A similar though less important discovery of Latin texts took place in the early years of last century.

The classical revival in Italy, meaning as it did freedom of thought and the claim to question all authority, was arrested in the latter half of the sixteenth century by a renewal of ecclesiastical restrictions. Muretus, the last of the 'humanists,' an elegant writer of Ciceronian Latin, died in 1585. But it was only in its earlier stages that the movement had been exclusively Italian. It soon spread beyond the Alps; its most distinguished representatives in the north were the German Reuchlin and the Dutch scholar Erasmus, who was professor of Greek at Cambridge for a short time from 1509. In our northern islands there were at least two native scholars of this period. Linacre taught Greek and Medicine at Oxford about 1500. The other was George Buchanan, who died at Edinburgh in 1582. Buchanan was known throughout Europe for his accomplishments as a scholar, and, among others, for his command of Latin verse. Scaliger said of him: '*Buchananus unus est in tota Europa omnes post se relinquens in Latina poesi.*' It is an art which since that

time his countrymen have rather persistently neglected. And there is too much justification for Dr. Johnson's remark on the subject of Buchanan. A Scotchman had said to him, 'You can say of Buchanan what you cannot say of any English scholar of the time.' 'Sir,' said the Doctor, 'you can say that he was the *only scholar of his country*.'

Apart from Holland and Britain, there was diligent study of the classics at Paris, and several distinguished scholars lectured there while Italy was still the main centre of philological activity. Among these was the Latin scholar Lambinus (1520-1572), now perhaps best known as an early editor of Lucretius. He and his predecessors prepared the way for the second great period of European scholarship, a period in which on the whole the pre-eminence belongs to France, though before or shortly after 1600 the best scholars of France had left that country, Scaliger going to Leyden in 1593 and Casaubon to England in 1610. Scholarship flourished in France while France was Protestant: the supremacy of the Church of Rome fettered its progress, as had been the case in Italy. In the French period a new tendency manifested

itself. The change is well described by the late Mark Pattison in his *Life of Casaubon* (p. 452),

‘The interest of the educated world,’ he says, ‘was transferred from the form to the matter of ancient literature. Masses of useful knowledge, natural or political, the social experience of many generations, were found to have lain unnoticed in books which had been all the while in every one’s hands. The knowledge and wisdom thus buried in the Greek writers presented a striking contrast to the barren sophistry, which formed the curriculum of the schools. It became the task of the scholars of the second period of the classical revival to disinter this knowledge. The classics, which had been the object of taste, became the object of science. Philology had meant composition, and verbal emendation; it now meant the apprehension of the ideas and usages of the ancient world. Scholars had exerted themselves to write; they now bent all their effort to *know*. The period of youthful enjoyment was at an end; the time of manhood, and of drudgery, was entered upon. There came now into existence what has ever since been known as “learning,” in the special sense of the term. The first period of humanism is

which the words of the ancient authors had been studied, was thus the preparatory school for the humanism of the second period, in which the matter was the object of attention. As Italy had been the home of classical taste in the first period, France became the home of classical learning in the second.'

It would take long even to enumerate the achievements of Scaliger and Casaubon in classical philology. It may suffice to mention, as characteristic of the new movement, Scaliger's work in chronology (*De emendatione temporum*), and his efforts to advance the study of inscriptions and coins. Neither Scaliger nor Casaubon was free from the limitations of his age. Neither, for instance, fully understood or appreciated Greek philosophical thought or its relation to Greek life and Greek history. But both possessed a knowledge of the contents of ancient literature which has hardly, if at all, been equalled since.

The next stage of European scholarship is one of perhaps greater interest for us, since England played a larger part in it. If Petrarch may stand for the first period, and Scaliger for the second, the prominent and

representative figure in the third is an Englishman, and the countries which now take the lead in classical study are England and the Netherlands. This third period extends to about 1790, when Wolf inaugurated the fourth and last. What, it may be asked, remained to be done? The *form* of ancient literature had been the object of enthusiastic admiration and imitation with the Italians: the *matter* or contents had been exhaustively studied by their successors. Was not the progress complete? Had not classical literature been fully revealed to the mind of Western Europe? In one sense it had. But it was somewhat like an antique statue which has been brought to light by the spade, but not yet freed from all accretions and impurities, which stands in need of further scrubbing and polishing before its outlines can be seen in all their beauty and precision. In the course of transmission through the dark ages, the classical texts had suffered considerable obscurity. Copied by careless or ignorant scribes — the ‘*oscitans librarius*’ whose vagaries have perhaps been too often invoked by some ingenious critics — the texts undoubtedly contained still a great many flaws

and errors which could be removed by diligent and minute scrutiny. This was the task of the third period. It was neither creative and ardent like the first, nor encyclopaedic in its material knowledge like the second, but critical and grammatical. It examined manuscripts with more care, though not in the most scientific way; it endeavoured to arrive at clear and exact canons of idiom, and to formulate the true laws of metre; it applied stricter tests, and discriminated the spurious and the authentic in ancient writings with greater severity of judgment.

Bentley, the English representative of this movement, became master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1700, when he had already written his famous examination of the supposed *Epistles of Phalaris*. A new force appeared in the world of scholarship, a bolder and more robust intelligence, accompanied by a gift of incisive and forcible exposition such as had not before been known. The appeal was now to sound common sense and to the canons of good taste. Bentley was prepared to disregard the testimony of manuscripts if it presented to him something self-contradictory, futile or

inelegant. 'Nobis et ratio et res ipsa centum codicibus potiores sunt' is an often-quoted aphorism of his. It occurs in a note on Hor. *Odes*, III. xxvii. 15. Perhaps it has sometimes been quoted unfairly. It is not a general proposition, deliberately laid down. He is talking about a particular passage, and he adds 'præsertim accedente Vaticani veteris suffragio.' His strong common sense saved him from a merely reckless defiance of manuscript authority. But his general procedure is fairly represented by this passage. Of course 'ratio et res ipsa' is a dangerous test to apply. The most acute scholar may be mistaken in his conception of the 'ratio' of a passage. To apply it safely, an almost superhuman combination of knowledge and sound judgment is required. Bentley was very exceptional in both respects, but he was not infallible. Some of his drastic remedies for an unsound passage have repelled later scholars, especially among his own countrymen. His merits have, on the whole, met with fuller appreciation in Germany than in England. In dealing with the texts of poets, he had the great advantage of a sound and penetrating knowledge of metre. He discovered the Dig-

amma in Homer. And if there were many particular passages which he failed to heal (*sanare*) in a satisfactory way, it has been justly said of him that he 'healed' the art of metre itself; '*ipsam sanavit artem metricam.*'

English scholars who came after Bentley—Dawes, Porson, Dobree, and Elmsley—concerned themselves rather with Greek than Latin, and the same is true in a less degree of the contemporary scholars of the Netherlands. One of the notable achievements of the close of this period was a more subtle and exact appreciation of the character and history of the Attic dialect, leading to a discrimination of the pure Attic of prose and comedy from the poetic and Ionic language of the tragedians. Of Bentley's English followers Porson was the greatest. Elmsley, who perhaps belongs rather to the next period, resided for some time in Edinburgh (up to 1816, when he went to Italy). He was one of the contributors to the *Edinburgh Review*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>An achievement of the Italians in this period deserves recognition. Facciolati, and his pupil Forcellini, professors at Padua in the beginning and middle of the eighteenth century, put together the *Lexicon totius Latinitatis*, which it remained for the twentieth century to supersede by a better.

The fourth and last period has been one of great and varied activity, especially in Germany. It is undoubtedly to Germany that the supremacy in this period belongs; for though there has been a good deal of misdirected effort, the amount of sound and permanent work done far outweighs that of any other nation. It is not so easy to define the tendency of this period as it was in the case of earlier stages. What kind of knowledge has been its ideal? Certainly a comprehensive and encyclopaedic knowledge, as in the period of Scaliger and Casaubon; but knowledge better organised and more scientific, the application of a better method in all departments of philology, and the co-ordination of these departments in a single whole, so that one throws light upon another. If any one man deserves to be named as representative of this period, it is probably Wolf. We are apt to think of Wolf as a mere sceptic, a destructive critic who shattered the belief in a single great poet Homer. But Wolf was much more than that. The *Prolegomena* was not his only work, and he exercised great influence through his lectures. Wolf's destruction was of the kind which results in reconstruction. He asked

questions which were really unavoidable, and to which his successors, working on his own lines, were sure to give a better and fuller answer.

In the early years of last century there occurred, a renewal of the experience of Petrarch and Poggio—a discovery of Latin texts. Poggio had unearthed complete texts or codices. The quite recent discoveries have consisted in fragile papyri, preserved for us in many cases by the exceptional dryness of the sands of Egypt. Other papyri, calcined and more fragile still, had been recovered at Herculaneum in the eighteenth century. The material of the new texts discovered in the second and third decades of last century was the thicker and tougher one of parchment (*membrana*). It is a material which can be scraped clean and used a second time, and when so treated it was a ‘palimpsest,’ *παλίμψηστος*. The earlier writing was often imperfectly deleted and still capable of being deciphered. It was such obliterated texts that now came to light. The fortunate finder was an Italian, Angelo Mai, who became a cardinal in 1838, and died in 1854. He had been librarian in the Ambrosian Library at Milan

and in the Vatican. Among his important discoveries was a very ancient manuscript of Plautus. The writing had been partially effaced to make way for a portion of the Vulgata, the second book of Kings. Several passages from the hitherto unknown 'Vidularia' have been deciphered from this text, and it throws much light upon other plays already known. This was at Milan. In the Vatican, Mai discovered a large part of Cicero's treatise *De Re Publica*.

It would be vain to attempt even to enumerate the scholars of this fourth period. Most of them have devoted their energies to the investigation of ancient Greek literature and civilisation, the more fascinating and fertile field for original research. Latin scholars have been fewer, and it is perhaps not quite so hopeless a task to review their work briefly: the critical sagacity which Lachmann brought to bear upon the text of Lucretius and other authors: the revolution which Ritschl effected in the treatment of the text of Plautus, and in the method of weighing and utilising manuscripts in general: the acuteness of Haupt in determining the authorship of various Latin poems: the instructive and comprehen-

sive studies of Ribbeck in the field of early Roman poetry: the mastery of Latin idiom and the critical insight which enabled Madvig in Denmark to emend finally a large number of passages in Latin prose authors. A complete survey of the period would have to include historians and antiquarians also, the searching examination to which Niebuhr subjected early Roman history, and the work of the greatest ancient historian of recent times, Theodor Mommsen, whose history of Rome has only one defect of any magnitude, namely, that it is not free from political bias. Mommsen is as distinctly a Caesarian and imperialist in his views as Grote was democratic. This may perhaps be taken as an indication of the vitality of classical studies and the closeness of their connection with modern life.

A good and complete history of scholarship has not yet been written. What I have tried to do in this lecture is to give some such impression as might be derived from looking at the Table of Contents in such a work. I have named a few prominent names and indicated some of the large divisions into which the

subject falls. I will conclude with two reflections which are rather obviously suggested by such a survey. We have seen the classical authors forming the object of laborious and unremittent study from generation to generation, becoming as time went on better understood, and if never more ardently admired than in the earliest Italian period, yet continuing to elicit a hardly less steadfast if more discriminating devotion. The work of the commentator, on the other hand, generally passes away. He interprets the classics for his own age, and a succeeding age calls for a new exponent. The reason is that the great writings of Greece and Rome are works of art. If you ask a sculptor whether the Venus of Melos or the Hermes of Olympia has been 'superseded,' he will merely laugh at the question. So it is with a great work of literary art. It never can be superseded. A later age may produce something greater, but even if it does, it is of necessity something different. If the earlier work is a real masterpiece, a model of correct thinking and of lucid expression, it retains the same instructiveness and the same charm that it had before. The notion that classical authors have ceased to be

worth studying is due to a confusion of ideas. A scientific theory such as that of the fixity of the earth is in time exploded or superseded. But great poems, speeches or histories are not superseded, any more than the pyramids are superseded by the building of a new hotel in Cairo.

The commentator, not the author, is superseded. But the commentator's work does not utterly pass away, it is not entirely fruitless. His illustrations, the explanations he has given, are adopted by his successor, who can make a better commentary by starting with these materials, adding to them and adapting them to new conditions. The art of interpretation has been consistently progressive, and the second reflection to which I would call your attention is this. The classical student of the present day has advantages which none of his predecessors had. By the prolonged labour of scholars the classical authors have been made more accessible. Paths have been cut, as it were, through what was before a tangled wilderness. Principles can be taught to a schoolboy in half an hour which it took years of toil to verify and formulate. So familiar a matter as the elementary

structure of the tragic senarius was only settled by Porson at the end of the eighteenth century. One of the reasons why classical literature retains its value as an instrument of education is just this, that so much has been done to formulate and elucidate the principles of grammar and the principles of style on which it is built. We have to deal not merely with a beautiful or impressive work which excites vague admiration, but with a work which we can to some extent analyse and explain.



## X.

### AIMS AND METHODS OF CLASSICAL STUDY.<sup>1</sup>

THERE has been but little real discussion on this subject in Great Britain. Classical education is generally accepted as an established fact, or its value is criticised from some partial point of view, and in contrast with the claims of some other study. Most people could give a very distinct answer to the question, What is the object of study in botany, in astronomy, in geology? Many people could define with some precision the sphere or object studied in ethics or political economy. But a classical student would often be puzzled by the ques-

<sup>1</sup> For many principles and examples I am indebted to Böckh's *Encyclopädie der philologischen Wissenschaften* and to the *Handbuch der Classischen Alterthumswissenschaft*, edited by Ivan Müller (vol. i.).

tion *what* he is studying, and how and why. He would perhaps answer, as some of Socrates' acquaintances answered similar questions, by saying that he was studying Homer and Sophocles, Virgil and Tacitus. If we asked him whether he was studying the formation of their words and the construction of their sentences, or the use which they make of words as a vehicle of expression, or the thoughts which they express, he would probably have to answer—would answer if he was a thorough, intelligent student—that he was studying all three. We should have made an advance in our inquiry, but we should still lack a coherent and complete account of the matter.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the word 'philology' has not become really current in English. 'Comparative philology' is a familiar phrase; but it does not designate well what it is meant to designate, and it has obscured the proper use of the substantive, unqualified by 'comparative.' Comparative philology means the study of the forms which words assume in different cognate languages, and of the changes which they undergo from generation to generation. But by its etymology the word philology

does not express this at all. 'Words' in this sense are not λόγοι, but ῥήματα or λέξεις; a spoken tongue is γλῶσσα. λόγος means an argument or proposition, an intelligible statement: a group of words which conveys a meaning. The φιλόλογος then is one who is interested in what men have said: in their intelligible utterances: the expression which they have found for their ideas and experiences. The utterances of some nations have a stronger claim upon us than those of others. Their life and thought are more instructive, better adapted to give us an insight into the meaning of life as a whole and the progress of civilisation. A 'classical' writer would be one who had used a powerful and flexible language with a master hand for the expression of ideas which must have an interest for all time. Such writings are the immediate object of classical education. And what we are dealing with in studying them is obviously threefold: the mere language, forms of words and constructions; the manner in which these are used; and the thoughts or experiences which are revealed to us through them. We are to study then the language, the literature, and the life, or the life and thought, of

an ancient people. How are these three studies related to one another? The interest of the first is a scientific interest; that of the second, an aesthetic one; that of the third, a philosophical one. What is their relative importance?

From one point of view—that of the scientific enthusiast—all knowledge has an absolute value, and it is presumptuous to say ‘this is higher than that.’ But from another, the three studies may be placed in an ascending scale of importance, a scale in which the lower exist as means to the higher. We study language in order to be able rightly to appreciate literature; we study literature in order to arrive at a knowledge of the life and ideas of its writers. If there is a higher and lower in the order of the world at all, we must place them in such a scale, and place them above natural sciences, in so far as their objects are higher and more complex. The processes of vegetation stand on a higher plane than the mechanical action of fire and water; animal life stands above vegetable; and we are studying a lower object when we are examining the cells of a beehive than when we are investigating the institutions and beliefs of mankind. So within our triple group: we are

dealing with a higher object when we come to the second—for instance, when we discriminate various forms of the drama—than when we trace the stages of phonetic change, and follow modifications of grammatical usage, which came about with little or no consciousness on the part of their makers; and the proper appreciation of the whole life and thought of an ancient people stands higher still.

It must be remembered that we have been speaking only of the things studied, the objects of inquiry. The relative value of the *method* of inquiry in each case, as a mental discipline, is a quite different question. Superiority in that respect is not necessarily claimed for the study which we have so far put highest. It is conceivable that the method of geology might be more practically instructive *qua* method. I do not suppose that it is. But it would be well if students of human life acknowledged that the method of their sciences is more open to abuse. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. Inquiries in these spheres are too apt to degenerate into rhetoric and fine writing. In natural science there is something like a certainty of solidity and exactness within its sphere. But the moral of this

is surely not to make natural science the staple of general education, and to reject everything else, but rather to improve the method of the sciences of man until they include among their merits the qualities of some natural sciences which at present perhaps surpass them.

‘Philology’—if we may assume the right to use the word as a symbol for the inquiry which I have defined—means clear and ordered information concerning the language, literature, and life of a nation. It means this when regarded as a science or a body of truth standing on record once for all. But it has other aspects which we cannot exclude. It is progressive; it implies an art or method. And, again, it is, in practice, used as an instrument of education or mental training. So that we seem to have two further inquiries before us—

1. What is the art of the scholar or philologist? What is it his business to do, and what are the principles on which he proceeds?

2. How is the whole of philology—science and art together—best applied to the purposes of education? that is, general education, or the training of those who are not learning philology ἐπὶ τέχνη, with the view of being professional

philologists themselves, but who will be called upon in real life to engage in some quite different and perhaps very practical pursuit.

The art or business of the philologist, his *τέχνη* or *ἔργον*, is a double one, to interpret and to criticise: that is (1) to arrive at and explain the true meaning of what is written; (2) to decide whether a word, a passage, or a whole treatise is genuine, whether it is what it professes to be; and here we encounter the science of palaeography, an inquiry which Aristotle would call *ὑπηρετική*, the handmaid of criticism, whose aim is to undo the mischief and confusion which lapse of time has wrought. Interpretation and criticism must be considered in greater detail.

To interpret a passage in any author may involve different kinds of knowledge. Inevitably we encounter here the same triple distinction as before. It may involve linguistic knowledge, or literary knowledge, or knowledge of facts and institutions—what we may call, in a wide sense, historical knowledge. But in dealing with the art of philology, it is in some ways convenient to adopt a rather different classification, and to specify four kinds of problems instead of three.

We may distinguish, in the first place, two

large classes—problems involving knowledge of facts or of history, and problems involving knowledge of language; in other words, problems of matter or content, and problems of form. The latter class may next be sub-divided thus:

1. Difficulties involving the elementary laws of the language as a whole, of Latin or Greek—grammatical difficulties.

2. Difficulties involving the canons or principles of a particular species of literature. To take simple instances, the canons of interpretation are not the same for tragedy and comedy, for poetry and prose.

3. Difficulties depending for their solution upon knowledge of the idiosyncrasies of the particular writer who is being studied.

Speaking roughly and generally, we may add that the sphere of observation is becoming gradually narrower as we pass from the first of these classes to the third. It is first the whole language; then writings of a particular class; lastly, writings of one man.

Further, as the field is narrowed, the problems seem on the whole to increase in complexity and subtlety, though no doubt some problems of class 1 are harder than some of class 3.

We may notice also that this view seems to be confirmed by the history of Greek criticism. The problems of greatest difficulty, we should expect, would be arrived at last. And as a matter of fact, the three great grammarians of Alexandria to some extent illustrate our three stages of progress. Zenodotus, the earliest of them, had little scruple about appealing to analogies and precedents of any age and any place. Besides applying the moral and social canons of his own day to the criticism of Homer, he frequently explained or emended Homer's language by the light of later Greek idiom or by the help of some dialect such as that of 'the Cretans.' Aristophanes can be shown by at least one instance to have made an advance upon this view. Anacreon had spoken of a hind as horned (*κεροέσσης*); Zenodotus read another adjective, *ἐροέσσης* in the dative plural, agreeing with a contiguous word 'forests' (*ἐν ὕλης ἐροέσσης ἀπολειφθεῖς ἀπὸ ματρὸς*). But Aristophanes refuted the conjecture by pointing out that several other poets had done the same thing—notably Pindar and Simonides: in other words, he had come to see that the canons of interpretation were

not the same for poetry and for a treatise in what we should call natural history or science. It was reserved for Aristarchus to go further still, and insist that a poet should be studied in the light of his own language; that Homer must be his own commentator, and that the duty of the critic is to collect passages where a word occurs, and determine its meaning by their help; that Homer is to be interpreted not by the laws of Greek in general, nor by the laws of poetry in general, but by his own usage and style—'what is habitual with the poet,' as Aristarchus expressed it, τὸ ἔθιμον τοῦ ποιητοῦ.

I. Let us consider a few examples of interpretation and criticism which fall under these various heads, taking first questions which involve historical knowledge—historical knowledge in the widest sense, information about the politics or religion or morals of the ancients. How much knowledge is necessary to enable us to understand the simple phrase, 'the goddess,' in the various contexts where it occurs! In the mouth of an Athenian, ἡ θεὰ generally means the protectress of Athens.

Pallas. At the beginning of Plato's *Republic*, however, ἡ θεός means the Thracian Bendis, and in Theocritus ἡ θεός is Hecate. The dual again, τὼ θεώ, meant at Athens the great goddesses of Eleusis, Demeter and Persephone. At Sparta, τὼ σιῶ meant the Dioscuri, Castor and Pollux: in Boeotia, Amphion and Zethus, the founders of Thebes. When Catullus addresses a goddess as 'Rhamnusia virgo,' we require to know that Nemesis or Adrasteia had a sanctuary at Rhamnus on the coast of Attica. To take an instance from history in the narrower sense of the word: Lucan, after describing how Cæsar set aside the tribune Metellus, and broke into the treasury, concludes with one of his epigrammatic lines—  
'Pauperiorque fuit tum primum Cæsare Roma'  
(*'Now, for the first time, Rome was poorer than Cæsar'*). This is not an allusion to Julius Cæsar's debts, as some critics have thought. Lucan is thinking of his own day, and meant to say, 'This was the beginning of the present system, under which the imperial *Fiscus* is far more important than the old *Acrarium*.'

More difficult questions arise when an author

says something which is seemingly at variance with facts of history known to us. Thus in the eighth ode of the fourth book Horace seems to confuse the elder and the younger Scipio: he speaks of the burning of Carthage as an achievement of a hero whose deeds were celebrated by the 'Calabrian Muses.' It was the younger Scipio who burnt Carthage, the elder whose exploits were sung by Ennius. Is this a case of interpolation, or has Horace stretched a poet's privilege and fused into one the two great Africani, as if the younger were only the elder re-embodied on earth again? Here we may doubt the genuineness of the text. In other cases we are able to condemn without much hesitation. Bentley's dissection of the spurious *Letters of Phalaris* is the best known piece of work in this field. An interesting case is that of an epigram quoted in one of the ancient Lives of Homer. It is said to have been inscribed on the pedestal of a statue of Pisistratus at Athens. 'Thrice I ruled Athens, and thrice was driven into exile,' is the substance of the first two lines: in the next two Pisistratus claims to have collected the poems of Homer, and the last two lines

claim Homer as an Athenian citizen, Smyrna being a colony of Athens. Now the facts are wrong. Pisistratus was driven out only twice, for he died a tyrant; and it is in the last degree unlikely that a statue of Pisistratus would be allowed to stand in a city where Harmodius and Aristogiton received annual worship as the heroic liberators of their country. And, again, if there was a monument to a great ruler like Pisistratus, it is hardly possible that *two-thirds* of the record would be given to a mere literary enterprise! Some of the authorities whom Wolf quoted for his theory of a Pisistratean recension probably derived their information from this late and spurious epigram. If his theory had no better basis to stand upon than this pedestal of a statue to Pisistratus, it would be in a very shaky condition. It is not quite so easily disposed of as that. But the matter cannot be pursued further here.

II. Turn now to questions which involve language rather than fact—the form rather than the subject-matter of ancient writings. We distinguished here three narrowing circles of inquiry: the general laws of a language or

dialect, the canons of a particular species of literature, the idiosyncrasies of a particular writer.

(a.) Problems of the first kind, those which involve general principles of grammar, are very familiar to the reader of commentaries, and I do not propose to illustrate them at length. Take one or two critical difficulties. 'Suus,' as a general rule, must refer to the subject of the sentence in which it occurs. The exceptions usually found are of the kind that are said to 'prove the rule,' that is, they have some principle in them. We can see *why* the rule does not hold, *e.g.* 'in civitates *quemque suas* dimisit.' But what is to be said of this instance?

'Haec et plura refert, lacrimae *sua* verba sequuntur.'

This line occurs in the poem known as the 'Consolatio ad Liviam,' an elegy on the death of Drusus (line 165). Various infelicities and irregularities of expression caused Haupt to assign this poem to the fifteenth century, to suppose that it was the work of an Italian scholar at the revival of letters. This view has been disputed by more recent critics. If '*sua*' means 'her words,' it is difficult to believe that

'suus' would be so used by *any* writer of the age of Augustus or Tiberius. But I am inclined to think that 'sua' may be taken strictly and referred to 'lacrimae': 'follow words all their own,' *i.e.* lacrimosa, tearful, words which tears have claimed or interrupted. For a Greek example we may take the occurrence of the word ἀνόμιμος in the text of the Platonic dialogue *Minos*. ἀνόμιμος is incorrectly formed—it is so contrary to analogy that it must be rejected as a misreading. The negative of νόμιμος is ἄνομος. Here again there is a significant exception, ἁδόκιμος: there is not, in normal Attic, a substantive δόκος meaning repute or approval. ἁδόκος would be unintelligible.

(b.) The canons which regulate a particular species of writing often raise very interesting questions; generally, too, very difficult questions, for we are here dealing with aesthetic criticism and rules of art. How far may we pursue an allegorical interpretation in the old comedy of Athens? Demos in the *Knights* deposes his slave Cleon with the words, 'Give me back my signet-ring: you shall not be my steward (ταμίης) any longer.' Is it safe to infer from this that Cleon held some high financial office,

answering to our Chancellor of the Exchequer? What are the limits of allegory in an ode of Pindar?—a still more difficult question. Do Pelias and Jason in the fourth Pythian answer to Arcesilaus the king of Cyrene and the exile Damophilus? Both these questions, probably, should be answered in the negative. But there are other forms of composition in which allegory goes much further—in Dante's poem, for instance, to take a later instance. To find very elaborate allegory, one must come to later ages; for allegory and symbolism have but a small place in ancient literature and art. What of Horace? In the third ode of the third book he makes Juno protest strenuously against the rebuilding of Troy: 'Let leagues of sea roll between Ilium and Rome, and the exiled Trojans may lord it as they please.' There must be some *ύπόνοια* or hidden meaning here; the idea is insisted upon too strongly and at too great length to be a mere fancy. But critics are divided as to its significance. Julius Cæsar is said to have entertained a project for transferring the seat of empire to Troy. Perhaps this was again talked of, and Horace came to know that Augustus was averse to it and wished it to be discouraged.

Another view is that the Troy which may not be rebuilt is the old republican constitution ; or, again, it is suggested that the passage is a protest against the tendency to adopt Oriental fashions and ideas, a tendency which Augustus' opponent, Antony, had furnished a memorable example.

The use of metaphor and figurative language, like that of allegory, is different in different forms of literature. The dithyramb in ancient Greece allowed a greater license than any other kind of composition. Here is a simple instance. In the *Odyssey* (ix.) there occurs the phrase *διερῷ ποδὶ φευγόμεν* ('To flee with nimble or supple foot'). Some ancient interpreters took 'wet foot' to mean a ship. This sense is rejected in the Scholia as being *διθυραμβῶδες*, in the manner of the dithyramb. A dithyrambic poet might have called a ship a 'wet foot,' but an epic poet could not do so. We may note that tragedy in its beginnings was closely connected with the dithyramb, and gradually shook itself free from turgid language of this kind. There is a good deal of it in Aeschylus, less in Sophocles, and very little in the plain and lucid Euripides. Is the phrase which we meet with in the *Antigone*,

line 601,<sup>1</sup> too dithyrambic for Sophoclean tragedy?

Several other important matters fall under this head of literary interpretation. One of these is the distinction between primitive or simple poetry and the poetry of a late and learned age. In a poet like Virgil or Milton the meaning of a word or phrase cannot be fully understood unless we take into account the use which has been made of it by previous poets. Milton applies the word 'nectareous' to the blood of an angel—'the blood nectareous flowed.' Bentley thought this must be a misreading—that 'ichorous' was what Milton wrote, *ἰχώρ* being in Homer the blood of the gods, while nectar is the Olympian equivalent for wine. In this case, I think, Milton knew his Homer better than Bentley; for the *adjective* *νεκτάρεος* has a wide range of use and meaning—Homer actually applies it to a *tunic*, in book xviii. It meant strange, rich or divine. 'Blood ichorous' is either a tautology or a contradiction in terms!

Again, we must be prepared to distinguish

<sup>1</sup> κατ' αὖτις φονία θεῶν  
τῶν νεκτέρων ἀμῶ κόμισ.

between jest and earnest ; we must not treat a familiar letter or a satire with the solemn gravity which would be in place in interpreting tragedy. When Augustus invited Horace to become his private secretary, he wrote to Maecenas, 'Veniet ab ista parasitica mensa ad hanc regiam' ('He is to exchange the board of a patron for that of a monarch'). If there were any doubt that the words are playful, it would be dispelled by the fact that the invitation was refused. Horace preferred to stay where he was. We seem to see that Augustus was not on bad terms with his subjects, and was no very oppressive despot, if it was possible for him to jest with the adjective 'regius.' Another instance of too serious interpretation occurs in the comment of an editor upon a well-known passage in Juvenal. The satirist is accused of drawing no distinction between the crime of murdering a mother and that of *writing bad verses*. Juvenal compares Orestes and Nero : he makes out a list of crimes which Orestes did *not* commit, and he finishes off with the climax, 'Troica non scripsit' ('Orestes never wrote a poem on the siege of Troy'). A critic might perhaps object to the whole passage as flippant ;

but if we remember that the murder of Agrippina was a thing of the past—it happened nearly half a century before Juvenal wrote—even that charge loses something of its force.

The aesthetic appreciation of ancient poetry depends very largely upon the proper study of prosody and metre, a matter which is too often neglected. We too often read an ode of Pindar, or even of Horace, as if it were so much poetical prose, without any thought of the metre at all. No doubt Greek and Latin verse is very difficult for us, because it is very different in nature from English verse. In Greek and Latin there are two things, quantity and accent, which are not sharply distinguished in our own language. We therefore tend to fall into one extreme or the other—we attend to the quantity and let nothing else be heard, ‘árma virúmque canó,’ or we think of the spoken accent and make the ‘a’ of ‘cano’ long. To a Greek, and to an educated Roman who was familiar with Greek poetry, accent was a matter of quality or pitch: it was nothing so gross and tangible as loudness or duration of a sound: it was a musical difference, and one so subtle as to remain almost entirely with-

out effect upon the structure of verse—the very earliest Italian poetry was perhaps to some extent accentual, but we need not concern ourselves with that exception now. The ancient reader or hearer of verse must have been conscious of both quantity and accent ; and if we are to appreciate properly any work of art, we must surely reproduce the conditions under which it was created and for which it was intended. How is this to be done? It may seem a hard saying, but it is probably the truth, that we must become so familiar with the metrical structure of verse that we do not have to think about it at all—it must suggest itself to us mechanically and without effort. We shall then have some attention to spare for the varying effects of accent. It should be possible for any student to do this in the case of some of the simpler and more common forms of verse, such as the Hexameter. For the more complicated choric verse of Pindar, I believe the only real solution is to learn an ode by heart and repeat it, giving effect to the metre, until it comes to us easily and mechanically. How otherwise can we put ourselves on a level with the ancient hearer, to whom the thing was sung by a care-

fully trained chorus? *He* did not read it as so much turgid prose.

To turn to a more mechanical aspect of the matter, the metrical principles of a particular form of composition often vitally affect the constitution of the text. In a great many passages of tragedy, the determination of the reading involves this question: Did a tragic poet allow a complete foot and a syncopated foot to answer to each other in strophe and antistrophe? Could a trochee or tribrach, — or — —, answer to a single syllable on which the voice dwelt for the duration of a whole foot (— or ●)? This is one of the most doubtful and difficult problems in metrical criticism. But the study of almost any poet involves some question of form and structure. In Horace, for example, there is the inquiry whether *all* the odes are to be regarded as falling into stanzas of four lines. We here meet with a new reason for doubting the passage about the Scipios and Ennius; for the eighth ode of the fourth book has as it stands thirty-four lines, and thirty-four is not a multiple of four.

(c.) Interpretation and criticism, which depend upon the peculiarities of a particular author—

his 'personal equation'—might be illustrated at even greater length than our previous class of problems. We must be content with glancing at a few conspicuous instances. Aristarchus, we have seen, was the great exponent of this method in antiquity. He compared, for example, all the passages where Homer uses the words φόβος, φοβείσθαι, and their cognates, and he made out that the words mean, not fear as an emotion of the mind, τὸ κατὰ ψυχὴν δέος, but rout or flight. This once established, the few passages where this meaning was impossible fell under suspicion: φοβέοντο δέ οἱ φρένες ἐντός! His heart took to flight within him! The true reading, Aristarchus determined, was τρομέοντο. Perhaps Aristarchus sometimes carried his principle of 'analogy' or regularity too far, he laid down too rigid a canon; but he did work of immense value for the interpretation of Homer, and most of his results remain unshaken.

Let us try to apply the method of Aristarchus to Virgil—let us look for τὸ ἔθιμον τοῦ ποιητοῦ. Many editors find in Virgil a survival of the participial sense of some adjectives: 'tuta lacu nigro,' protected by a dark pool; 'sublimibus alta

columnis,' reared on high columns; 'tepidaque recentem caede locum,' flowing with warm blood ('recens' being an old present participle). Is this a safe inference? Is it not rather Virgil's manner, his ἔθιμον, to put an adjective in such places? 'fumantibus ardua saxis'—'ardua' is not a participle! The text of Horace again raises in various places difficult questions as to what is Horatian and what un-Horatian. Would Horace put the prosaic pronoun 'eius' in a conspicuous place in a Sapphic verse, 'muniant angues caput eius'; and if not, is the line to be emended, or the stanza in which it occurs condemned as a whole? Again, there is the well-known passage in Book I., 'veris inhorruit adventus foliis,' the coming of spring rustles, among the leaves, on the leaves. This may be beautiful and imaginative; but is it quite like Horace? Has it his usual lucidity and precision? I incline, somewhat reluctantly, to the opinion that the emendation, 'vepris . . . ad ventum,' is right. It was made by Bentley, with the help of some hints from earlier critics. Certainly Bentley at times wields too recklessly the sledge-hammer of a cold and formal logic: he sometimes fails to appreciate the delicacy and subtlety of a poet's language.

But in this particular instance one suspects that it is sentimental to resist his view.

Criticism of the kind we are considering has to deal not merely with particular expressions or passages, but often with whole poems or treatises. It denies to Demosthenes the speech 'on the Halonnesus,' and would be justified in so doing by a single phrase,<sup>1</sup> in the last section of the speech, if there were no other evidence for the authorship of Hegesippus. This subject of spurious writings is a very large one, and we may leave it with a caution. The critic who is disposed to deny that the *Rhesus* can be a work of the youthful Euripides, or the *Dialogue De Oratoribus* an early work of Tacitus, or the *Laws* a work of Plato's old age, would do well to ask himself at the outset what are the degrees of divergence in quality between the undoubted works of the same author: if 'Pauline' had been published anonymously, and had been included by some accident in Browning's poetical works, would not the critics have expelled it again? And would the ordinary, careless reader, who understood it from beginning to end

<sup>1</sup> εἴπερ ὑμεῖς τὸν ἐγκέφαλον ἐν τοῖς κροτάφοις καὶ μὴ ἐν ταῖς πτέρυγαις κατατεπατημένον φορεῖτε.

without an effort, have ever been convinced that it was a work by the author of 'Sordello'? One can imagine one of Mr. Swinburne's more recent poems—the 'Tale of Balen,'—being denied to him if it had been published anonymously. It is very different both in metre and in manner from his other writings. We must reckon with versatility in an author, and expect to find considerable differences in what he writes. We must also reckon upon his sometimes falling below his usual level. I do not feel sure that the often-condemned passage in the *Antigone* (904-920) is not by Sophocles.

These illustrations have protracted themselves so much that little time remains for considering the subject of palaeography. The scientific study of MSS. belongs to the present century. The earlier scholars tended to consult MSS. at hazard. When the critic came to a difficult passage, he looked at various MSS. or readings from them, and selected anything that took his fancy whether the authority for it was good or bad. All this has been changed, and the study of texts has become a 'disciplina' or 'μεθόδος,' with a distinct scientific and therefore educational value, though it must always belong to

professional scholars rather than to students of literature. The modern palaeographer aims at making out a kind of 'genealogical tree' for the texts of his author, determining which are copies of which—which copies of one lost archetype, which of another. Wolf, who was by no means a mere sceptic, but did much solid work for the advancement of 'philology,' expressed the principle of this study in an epigram when he described manuscripts as '*surda plerumque oracula, nisi constanter consulentibus*'—oracles which are generally dumb to all but persistent inquirers.

Finally, what shall we say of this study of philology as a whole—the study of the language, the literature, and the life and thought of an ancient people—three things which we placed in an ascending scale of importance? It might perhaps be supposed that the last of them can be attained without the other two, or the two highest without the lowest; that all we need do is to read some clear and eloquent account of the life and thought of the ancients, or some authoritative critical treatise on the ancient authors, in order to get all the real advantage that can be got from a classical training. This

view is quite illusory. Generalisations about the life and thought of a past age are mere empty phrases, unless we possess some direct acquaintance with that life and thought. Critical description of an author's merits and defects is one of the most useless forms of human knowledge, unless we can read the author ourselves, and feel that it is true. The key to the whole lies in the laborious mastery of details—in the first instance, in minutely accurate study of grammar and idiom.

If it be true that many or most theological controversies arise 'ex ignoratione grammaticae,' and if in the sphere of law it is a not uncommon occurrence that important issues depend on the place of a comma or on some minute point of verbal interpretation, it is evident that there can be no short and easy way to the kind of insight which is the scholar's aim. We must climb the hill step by step, if we are to see for ourselves the prospect which it commands from its summit.

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